

Unconventional by MonsterSquad

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

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Relationships: Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

Mike and El meet online on a forum for Star Wars collectors. They start a friendship that quickly wants to head another way but they live far apart and won't be able to meet in real life for a few months at a Star Wars convention that will be held in Indianapolis, with Mike having offered to share his hotel room with her the first day they ever speak. The distance and the anticipation of seeing one another only causes their mounting feelings to intensify and they find themselves trying to find other ways to feel closer to each other.

1. Chapter 1

You're such a lurker. El Hopper heard her friend Max's voice in her head as she scrolled through pictures on her favorite forum, Rebelscum.com. She never posted her own, or hadn't so far. She was wary of what people might think of her collection. It was mostly toys and masks, or helmets in the case of Star Wars. There were some serious collectors on there.

Feeling bold, El decided she would test the waters by posting just one picture. She realized that she had never created a profile and would have to do that before she could post anything or comment so she took some time to think of a good name, finally landing on Elderaan, smiling to herself at her clever play on the planet's name. She posted a picture of a Darth Vader helmet, thinking she'd be lucky if *maybe* two or three people commented on it.

About twenty minutes later she got a notification that there was a comment on her post. She clicked on the link to read it.

A McQuarrie Vader?! That is awesome, dude! Where did you get it?

Someone with the screen name "Nerfherder" was asking. She recognized his moniker. He was a moderator on the forum. She liked to look at his collection pictures. She replied to the comment.

Thanks! I've had it for a while. But I'm not a dude, I'm a lady. ;-) She thought the emoticon would let him know that she wasn't offended by his honest mistake.

A few minutes later she received a private message from him on the Rebelscum site.

Hey, I'm so sorry I thought you were a guy! It was a real wastoid thing of me to assume a girl would never have such cool pieces. My name is Mike.

His apology for something so trivial coming to her so quickly made her chuckle. She wrote him back.

Don't worry about it! It's really not a big deal. And my name is El. I like to look at your pictures.

She had hit the send button before she realized how that last line might be taken the wrong way. Before she could delete the message, he had written her back. *So much for him not seeing that*, El thought.

You like to look at my pictures? Heh, I'm just kidding with you. I know you didn't mean it that way. Great name. Elderaan. That's brilliant! I get it now. At first I thought you just couldn't spell, but I also thought you were a guy so I was wrong all around. You should post more so I can look at your stuff. I'm going to shut up now before I say anything else that can be considered innuendo. I don't know what's come over me.

El was surprised by his comment. She hadn't taken anything he said as innuendo but clearly he was thinking it or he wouldn't have mentioned it. She wondered what he looked like. She didn't even know how old he was. For all she knew he could be sixty or sixteen. At twenty-five years old she did not have the desire to play games with weird people. And he had no idea about her either, so maybe she was analyzing it too much, like she always did. She took a chance and wrote him back once more.

I might post more depending on what kind of feedback I get on this first post. Are you on Instagram? I have a lot of Star Wars pics on there if you wanted to see. I'm ElHopper011.

She figured she could always block him if it turned out that he was a creepy stalker. She also thought it was a way that she could see what he looked like. Surely there were a couple of pictures of him on there, if he had an Instagram account. Another message popped up in her inbox.

I'm going to add you then. I'm ThePaladin. I'll let you know what I think of your pics. Aaand, I did it again. I'm sorry.

El laughed out loud that time. She was eager to see what this guy looked like. She was enjoying the interaction and she hoped she was talking to someone her age. Usually her roommate Max was the only person she really talked to and she had to work a lot. El didn't care

much for her own coworkers so she was usually down the rabbit hole of the Internet. That's how she had stumbled onto the Rebelscum forum.

She checked her phone and saw that she was now being followed by ThePaladin on Instagram so she checked his page. There were pictures of a lot of people so she wasn't sure which one might be him. His profile picture was a stormtrooper helmet so that didn't help her. She studied the images. One person who showed up a lot was a tall guy with floppy black hair that even though it was untamed looked good on him. He was pale with dark eyes and in a few of the closer shots she could see that he had freckles. She hoped she was looking at Mike. She thought she'd casually ask so she sent him a message via Instagram.

I'm looking at your pictures. There are a lot of group shots so I'm not sure which one is you.

She thought that sounded innocent, only someone seeking information. She didn't know why looking at what she hoped would turn out to be him made her palms feel sweaty.

It wasn't long before she received a message. As she'd hoped, the lanky boy with the dark hair was Mike. El felt her heart rate increase. He looked to be about her age and it felt like a weight she hadn't even realized she was carrying was lifted from her shoulders. She wondered if he was doing the same and looking at the pictures on her page. She didn't want to seem too interested, having heard from Max so many times how she needed to play a little hard to get. She really wanted to talk more to him though. She wondered what his voice sounded like. She waited ten minutes before sending him another message.

Who is your favorite Star Wars character and which is your favorite movie?

He wrote back quickly.

Clearly Empire is the best movie and Han Solo is my favorite character. What about you? And if you say any of the prequels besides Rogue One

or Solo this conversation is over, haha. And which are you, the brunette with the pretty eyes or the redhead? I'm looking at your page...

El could feel her cheeks warming as she read his comment about her pretty eyes. She scrolled through her own page on her phone to see what he might be seeing if he was looking at her pictures right then. She didn't think there was anything too embarrassing. She replied to him.

Leia is the most badass of them all, in my opinion. You are correct about Empire being the best movie. I hated the prequels so we can continue talking. :-) And I'm not the redhead. That's my roommate.

El anxiously waited for him to message her back. She wanted to know more about him. She soon got another message.

I think you're really pretty. I'm just sayin'. Are you going to the Star Wars convention in Indianapolis? It's in June. It's not that far from where I live so I'll definitely be there.

El had never been to a Star Wars convention. She had seen pictures online and had read about them. It seemed like it would be fun, lots of people dressed in character, meeting actors who played her favorite characters, she wished she could go too. Since it was only January she could try to save up but it was still doubtful.

I live too far away I think. I'm not sure how I could afford it. I'm in Maine. I could probably get a ticket but I'm not sure if I could afford the hotel and actually getting there. I'd have to fly.

Just thinking about how fun it would be to go, El was crunching the numbers in her mind. Since she was already online she opened a new window and looked for airfare prices. Maybe if she could buy an airplane ticket this far out it would be cheaper. And it was to Indianapolis, not a huge vacation destination. It looked to her like she could probably buy a round trip ticket from Bangor to Indianapolis for less than \$300. While she was looking at rates she got another message from Mike.

This may seem out of the blue and very weird so it's definitely fine if you

don't want to do it, but if you could get there you could share a room with me. My dad travels a lot and can use his travel points for a room at the hotel where the con is being held. There will be two beds. But I completely understand if you wouldn't want to do that. I'm a stranger, after all. It would just be cool if you could come.

His suggestion was both touching and a tad alarming. She had never even spoken to him for real. El couldn't help but imagine what it would be like to go to the convention though. She was tired of only going to work and then going home. She needed some excitement in her life. Mike was also cute and she felt a strange connection to him already. She thought she'd really like to meet him in person.

You'd do that for me? I looked at prices and I do have enough money to get airfare to Indianapolis but if I buy that I'll have to really save up so I'd have money for an admission ticket and anything else I wanted to buy. I might want to eat at some point. Maybe we should exchange phone numbers and get to know one another before we share a hotel room? Just a thought.

El included her phone number in her message. If they could just call each other it would be easier than private messages. And she wanted to hear what he sounded like. She got one more message from him.

You're right. Are you busy now? I could call you.

She didn't know why she felt so nervous. She cringed when she read her reply after she hit send.

I'll be waiting.

El facepalmed.

Her phone rang. She didn't recognize the number but she answered it anyway, knowing Mike had planned to call her. They had only been talking for a few minutes when El decided that she definitely liked the way his voice sounded. He sounded nice, soft but with an edge of sarcasm.

"Your collection is terrific. You have so many helmets! I'm jealous."

Mike said. El could tell he was smiling.

“I’ve been collecting them for a few years. I guess if I ever need money I could sell one. Maybe I should think about doing that before the convention. I could never pull off a costume in one anyway. I’m a little short for a stormtrooper.” El heard Mike laugh. “What are you laughing at?”

“Nothing. What do you do in Maine?” Mike asked, changing the subject.

“I work in the registrar’s office at the University of Maine. It’s a job. I’m hoping to move to the library if they ever have any openings that aren’t filled by students. The head librarian won’t retire for a few years though. They know I want it. I pester them all the time. What do *you* do?” El had wondered what Mike did for a living.

“I’m an anesthesiologist assistant. I’m not a doctor but it pays well and I didn’t have to go to school for as many years as to be an anesthesiologist. It’s interesting work. When I’m not working I’m either online or I’m hanging out with my friends Will, Lucas, and Dustin. I’ve known them since we were kids. Now that we’re out of school we don’t see each other as often but I guess that’s what the Internet is for these days, right? We try to get together a couple of times a month.”

As El was talking to Mike her roommate came home from work. El swivelled in her chair to see Max holding two bags from Target and a lamp.

“I got you something, El.” Max said, not noticing that El was on the phone.

“Hey, Mike? My roommate just got home and I should help her with her bags. Can I call you back later tonight?” El asked, hoping he would say yes.

“Sure, El. I’ll be right here. Do whatever you need to do. I don’t work tomorrow so I’ll be up late. We’re in the same time zone.”

“Okay, I’ll call you then. Bye, Mike.” El couldn’t keep herself from smiling as she hung up the phone. After she added Mike’s number to her contacts, she turned to Max. “What did you get me?”

Max held the lamp out to her. El was confused. Max rolled her eyes and explained.

“You can put things in it. I’m tired of all of your figures collecting dust and I thought, if you were okay with it, that we could put them in the base of the lamp. If you hate how it looks then we can take them out. I just think they’d be safer in here and since they’re all opened anyway they would take up less space.”

El looked at the lamp. Max had even bought a lampshade. It wouldn’t hurt to try.

“Let’s see how it looks then.” El decided.

Most of her figures had been passed down from her father’s collection from when he was a kid. El had found them while in the attic at his house one day and he had let her keep them. She and Max carefully placed the action figures inside the lamp, making sure to keep her favorite ones on the outside so she could always see them. El was impressed at how much she liked how it looked.

“Okay, this is pretty cool. Thanks, Max. You’re often right.” El smiled at her friend.

“You mean I’m *always* right.” El playfully shoved her. “Who were you talking to when I got home? You never talk to people on the phone. You’re always on the computer.” Max asked El, who had been smiling since she walked through the door.

“His name is Mike and he likes Star Wars as much as I do. We met earlier when I posted a picture of my Ralph McQuarrie Darth Vader helmet. We’ve been messaging each other all day so we finally exchanged phone numbers to make it easier. He’s our age and lives in Indiana. I started following him on Instagram. He’s really cute too.” El could feel her smile growing as she talked about him.

“You just met him today? Moving a little quick, are we?” Max’s left eyebrow raised.

“I know it seems fast but we’re just talking. Except...”

“What does *that* mean?” Max had her hands on her hips.

“There’s a Star Wars convention in Indianapolis in June and Mike said I could share a room with him for free if I could make it to the con. I know how crazy that sounds when I say it out loud.”

Max was quiet, clearly thinking. “Maybe it does sound crazy but you’re an adult. Is he nice? Do you get any weird feelings about him? June is still five months away. You have time to get to know him and decide. I’m going to say I’m not against it. You have to live a little, El.”

“He is nice. I’m going to call him back later tonight. I don’t get weird feelings about him in a *bad* way. When I heard his voice I felt kind of tingly. And I feel like I’ve known him forever. He’s just really easy to talk to. That’s what’s weird.”

“Sometimes things happen when you least expect, El.” Max smiled at her genuinely.

Mike couldn’t believe the way his day had gone. With two days off work in a row he had slept late and then surfed the Internet for a while. When he checked Rebelscum and saw the McQuarrie Vader helmet he had thought it was one of the coolest pieces he’d seen. He had to comment on it immediately.

A McQuarrie Vader?! That is awesome, dude! Where did you get it?

When what he had assumed was a guy wrote back and told him she was in fact a *lady* he had felt like a heel so he sent her a private message to apologize. Then she wrote him back.

Don’t worry about it! It’s really not a big deal. And my name is El. I like to look at your pictures.

He knew she didn't mean it the way it sounded but he couldn't help thinking immediately of what she might look like.

You like to look at my pictures? Heh, I'm just kidding with you. I know you didn't mean it that way. Great name. Elderaan. That's brilliant! I get it now. At first I thought you just couldn't spell, but I also thought you were a guy so I was wrong all around. You should post more so I can look at your stuff. I'm going to shut up now before I say anything else that can be considered innuendo. I don't know what's come over me.

He knew he shouldn't but he couldn't help flirting with her just a little bit. Then she told him her Instagram screen name and he immediately looked her up. He wasn't sure which of the two girls most pictured was her. They were both pretty but he couldn't stop looking at one of them more. She had wavy brown hair that hung to her shoulders, the kind of hair that would be curlier if it was shorter. In some of the pictures she was making silly faces and he thought she was adorable in every one. Her big hazel eyes shone bright and her smile was contagious, as Mike realized he was smiling along with the images he was seeing. He wanted to ask her which one she was. He hoped she was the girl he couldn't stop staring at. When she asked him his favorite character and movie he saw his chance.

Clearly Empire is the best movie and Han Solo is my favorite character. What about you? And if you say any of the prequels besides Rogue One or Solo this conversation is over, haha. And which are you? The brunette with the pretty eyes or the redhead? I'm looking at your page...

He hoped she'd say she was the brunette but he also hoped she would share his taste in the films. When she wrote back she eased his fears and he literally heard himself say *thank the Maker!*

Leia is the most badass of them all, in my opinion. You are correct about Empire being the best movie. I hated the prequels so we can continue talking. :-) And I'm not the redhead. That's my roommate.

He had to tell her how pretty she was, so he did. She had seen his pictures by then and if she didn't want to continue their conversation she could have stopped it at any time. But she kept it going so he did

the same. He liked talking to her. He wondered what she sounded like. He wanted to hang out with her. So he told her about the Star Wars convention. Maybe he could meet her there. He had gone back to scrolling through her Instagram posts after she confirmed which of the girls was her. He wanted to *talk* to her.

I live too far away I think. I'm not sure how I could afford it. I'm in Maine. I could probably get a ticket but I'm not sure if I could afford the hotel and actually getting there. I'd have to fly.

Mike was disappointed but then remembered that there were a lot of guys and girls who shared rooms as friends at cons and it wasn't weird at all, at least not in the world of conventions. It saved money and since a lot of the same collectors and fans attended the cons some of them became like family to each other. It was a tight-knit bunch. So he told her.

This may seem out of the blue and very weird so it's definitely fine if you don't want to do it, but if you could get there you could share a room with me. My dad travels a lot and can use his travel points for a room at the hotel where the con is being held. There will be two beds. But I completely understand if you wouldn't want to do that. I'm a stranger, after all. It would just be cool if you could come.

When she didn't seem put off at the idea he was hopeful and when she gave him her phone number so they could actually talk to one another he was ecstatic. He wanted to call her immediately. He read her message back to him after he'd asked if he could call her.

I'll be waiting.

He almost choked on the water he was drinking. He pulled himself together and called her. When she answered her phone Mike had to remind himself to speak. Her voice sounded so sweet, melodic, not too high nor too low. When she had said *I'm a little short for a stormtrooper*, Mike had fallen in love a little bit with her. She was pretty, funny, and nerdy. He tried not to think about how sexy she probably was as well. He had offered her the room out of kindness but he'd be kidding himself if he didn't think he was also wanting to spend some time with her alone. But that was months away and she

could still say no or she could decide she didn't like him or, and he didn't want to think about it, he could decide he didn't like *her*. As of now though, she seemed fun to talk to and they had some common interests and he had nothing but hope for what the future might bring.

He had just gotten out of the shower and was putting on his pajamas when he heard the text tone on his phone. It was from El. He opened it. She had sent a picture of a lamp that was filled with vintage Star Wars figures. He thought it looked awesome. The text said she would call him in a minute. His anticipation built.

She called not long after, asking him what he was doing.

"I just got out of the shower. I'm not going to sleep for a while though." He replied.

El pictured him getting out of the shower. *Stop it, El. You don't even know him.*

"The shower, huh? Did I catch you at a bad time? Are you wearing clothes?" *What the actual fuck, El?*

He laughed. "I am wearing clothes. Should I not be?" *Mike, don't be that guy.*

She laughed nervously. She was feeling something she hadn't felt before. She *liked* flirting with him and she liked when he did it back *even more*.

"Do you think it would really be okay to let me share a room with you? I've been thinking about it and I'd really like to go but if you have friends or someone else you want to share with I wouldn't want you to give the extra bed to me." She tried to get her mind off of what he might look like in his pajamas. Oddly enough, thinking about a hotel room didn't do it.

"I wouldn't have offered if I was planning on someone else staying there. I was going to get two beds in case anyone wanted to hang out with me in there. I know a lot of other convention goers. Sometimes

we'll order pizza. But it would be just us sleeping in there. You'd have your own bed." Mike was imagining what she slept in. He needed to stop that. "That lamp you sent me a pic of is really cool! Are those all your figures?"

"They were my dad's when he was a kid. He let me have them when I got so into Star Wars collecting. It was my roommate Max's idea to put them in the lamp. She was tired of them collecting dust. They actually do look neat in there and they take up less space."

"I think it looks awesome. So is Max the redhead in your Instagram pics?"

"She is. She's a good friend. We went to college together and now we share an apartment because it's expensive to have our own and I kind of like having someone around to talk to occasionally." El explained.

"So you don't have a boyfriend?" Mike asked, trying to sound casual.

"No, I don't date a lot. I'm weird."

"I find that hard to believe. I've seen your pictures. You're definitely pretty. You're beautiful. I'm just being objective. Just bein' honest."

El felt herself blush again. She tried to stop smiling before she spoke. "What about you? Do you have a girlfriend?"

"I was seeing this girl for a while but we really didn't have a lot in common. I wanted to be interested in what she liked but I couldn't make myself care. I realized she wasn't what I wanted. She wasn't right for me. So I ended it. She still calls me occasionally and it's always weird. Like, weird in a bad way, not weird like you think you are." He laughed.

"Do you think it's weird that I feel like I've known you my whole life? Am I being weird *right now*?" El asked him, her voice sounding thoughtful.

“Is it weird that I feel like that too? I’m glad you posted that picture today and that we started talking. It’s just easy to talk to you, you know? I feel kind of like I could tell you anything. I don’t know. Maybe I’m projecting.” Mike shook his head.

El wanted to say other things. She was pretty sure that she was starting to really like him now that she had spent the evening talking to him. They had laughed about things and she could tell that he was really listening when she told him about how her mother had died when she was a kid. He had sounded so sincere. She glanced at her clock and saw that it was past midnight. Talking to Mike had made the previous three hours seem like thirty minutes.

“Wow, it’s late. If you need to go to bed just let me know. I don’t mean to keep you up. The time slipped away.” El said softly.

Mike liked hearing her soft tone. “It slipped away from me too. I feel like we’ve only been talking for a few minutes.” Mike said.

“Your voice seems different now, more quiet.” El pointed out. “I’m not complaining, just noticing.”

“I’m in bed and I’m lying down. Maybe that’s it.” *Or maybe it’s talking to you late at night while I’m lying in bed.*

El let herself picture him lying in bed. He noticed the pause in the conversation.

“El, are you still there?” Mike asked quietly, thinking maybe she’d fallen asleep.

“I’m here. I distracted myself thinking about something.” She was grinning again.

Mike could tell that she had been smiling when she spoke. “What were you thinking about?” He almost whispered, sounding husky.

His change in tone made El want to take the conversation in another direction but it was their first day being friends. She couldn’t start it on the wrong foot, as much as she might like to let him say things to

her that made her feel that tingly feeling again, only on purpose instead of accidentally. She didn't think it would be a good idea. *Not just yet.*

She giggled a little. "Mike, I think I should probably get some sleep. I shouldn't keep you up all night." Her voice was soft and sweet.

"You aren't keeping me up. But I'll let you go to bed. I liked talking to you tonight, El."

She loved it when he said her name.

"Will you call me tomorrow? I'll be around all day." El asked him.

"I'll definitely call you. Text me when you're up. Cool?"

"Cool." El was still reluctant to hang up the phone even though she had been the one to suggest she go to bed.

"I'll talk to you tomorrow then. Night, El."

"Night, Mike."

As she lay in bed she replayed the day's events. She was certain that she wanted to talk to Mike again, all the time maybe. He made her feel excited and nervous and made her feel butterflies and it was all very thrilling. And she had only spoken to him for a few hours. She fell asleep imagining what it would be like to see him for real. What did he smell like? What did it feel like to hug him? What about other things she could only think about and not say aloud even to herself?

Mike was doing the same thing from his place in his bed. He had loved the way she sounded when she laughed and he wondered what it would be like to hold her, or to kiss her. He knew it was far too soon to be thinking things like that but he couldn't stop himself. He finally fell asleep, eagerly anticipating calling her again the next day.

2. Chapter 2

El made herself wait until close to 11:00 the next day to text Mike. She was doing like Max had said and not being too eager and trying to remain cool. She spent the better part of the morning thinking about how she and Mike needed to become friends before anything else could ever happen. From talking to him the day before she knew she didn't want to mess up something that could be really special by jumping into things too quickly. She finally let herself text him and just said that she was up and she hoped he had slept well. He called thirty minutes later. El wasn't sure why it had taken him so long to call but she didn't ask either, thinking that people had things to do in the morning sometimes.

They talked about random things, trying to see what all they had in common besides Star Wars.

"What kind of music do you like or what is your favorite band?" Mike asked as he popped some Eggo waffles into his toaster.

"You probably haven't heard of them. They're older than we are but I think the lead singer is really sexy even if he's old enough to be my dad." El laughed.

"Try me. I listen to a lot of indie bands and stuff. I'm not as into arena rock." Mike rummaged through a drawer for a fork. El could hear the silverware clanking against itself.

"It's a band called The Afghan Whigs. I discovered them when I was in college. A guy Max was dating left a CD in our dorm room and I listened to it and loved it."

"You're kidding. I love them! I saw them on the In Spades tour in Chicago last year! I can't believe you love them too! This is crazy." Mike sounded excited.

El felt her heart in her throat as Mike told her about the show he'd seen. She hadn't gotten to see them since Boston was the closest they had gotten to where she lived and she couldn't make it to the show.

They played small places and she had really wanted to see what it was like to listen to them up close.

“You got to see them? I’ve never gotten to see them. On the count of three, say which is your favorite of their albums.”

“Okay, I have them all. Ready?” Mike said.

“Ready. One, two, three...”

“*Black Love.*” Both Mike and El said at the same time.

Wow.

Mike broke the silence that had invaded the line when they both said the same album title. “That’s possibly cooler than your Vader helmet.” He said softly.

“Yeah. How weird is that? I wonder what else we like that’s the same.” El pondered.

“Do you like *Rick and Morty*?” Mike asked, thinking the smart but sometimes odd cartoon might be something that made them differ.

El laughed, “Wubba lubba dub dub, bitch.”

Mike had to put the phone down for a second. *Oh, my god! This girl is amazing!*

He could hear El calling for him so he put the phone back to his ear. “You are pretty awesome, El. I wish you lived closer so we could watch it together.” Mike still couldn’t quite believe how many of the same things they enjoyed. Not like, foods or drinks or seasons or colors but things that actually shaped how they saw the world.

“That would be the coolest. Could we watch something together over Skype some time?” El asked, trying to think of the next best thing since they were so far away from each other.

“We could do that. We’d just have to sync whatever we were

watching but that wouldn't be hard to do. Would you want to watch something tonight? Maybe we could watch Star Wars?"

"Make it *The Empire Strikes Back* and you have a deal. What time?" El asked, trying to hide the sheer excitement in her voice.

"Is 7:00 okay? I have to work tomorrow so I can't be up too late. Don't want to be killing anyone because I'm tired." Mike chuckled softly.

"That sounds great. I'll have everything ready on my end so you can count down when to push play. I'll watch it in my bedroom so I don't bother Max."

Mike thought about what El's bedroom might look like and wondered how much of it he'd be able to see through the webcams on their laptops.

"I'll watch it in my room too." Mike said.

"Both of us just lounging in bed watching the best Star Wars movie." El sounded coy.

They talked for the rest of the afternoon about the most trivial of things and found that they seemed to be in sync in more ways than they could imagine. Mike mentioned that he had only been to Boston one time when he was twelve because his sister was looking at colleges and his entire family went along. She wound up going somewhere else but he at least got to see a Red Sox baseball game. He wasn't that into baseball but the kids at school had thought it was cool.

"And you were twelve when? In 2003?"

"That's right." Mike agreed.

"Who did they play against when you saw them and do you remember what month it was? I only ask because I've seen them play once at Fenway Park and it was in April of 2003. They played the Blue Jays. I only remember because I was hoping the Blue Jays

would win because I liked the bird on their hats.” El said, remembering her father dragging her along to the game despite her protests about not liking baseball.

“I saw them in April too! I remember because my sister’s birthday is in April and we were in Boston the weekend before it. And they played the Toronto Blue Jays. Do you remember what day it was? What if we were there at the same time? How crazy would that be?” Mike was thinking of kismet.

“It was a Saturday because I had school the following Monday so we had to come back to Maine on Sunday.” El confirmed.

We were there at the same time!

“I saw them on the Saturday too. We were there at the same time, El.” Mike suddenly sounded awed.

El was starting to get worried. She knew she needed to try to take things slowly but every time she would think they’d disagree on something Mike proved her wrong and her feelings for him were multiplying quickly.

“Have you given any more thought to the convention?” Mike asked. El had been lost in thought, thinking about her growing feelings for him and had let the conversation pause.

“I really want to go. I know that much.” El said truthfully.

“I want you to go too. What if I bought your admission ticket for you? Would that help?” Mike offered.

“I couldn’t let you do that for me. You’ve already offered me a place to stay.” El sighed, wanting so badly to get to see him but not wanting to be a burden.

“El, my job pays really well and I don’t have a lot of expenses. It wouldn’t be a problem. It certainly wouldn’t be as big of a problem as if you weren’t there with me. I’ve been looking forward to hanging out with you.” He said sincerely.

El thought about what he'd said. She wanted to go to the convention, sure, but what she might be wanting *more* was to spend time with Mike. If he felt the same way she didn't want to waste his offer.

"Well it's almost the end of January. If I buy my plane ticket now I can save until June. If you want to buy my admission ticket so you've locked me in to come you can. I don't want to use you though. I'm coming because you invited me, not because I want something for free." El tried to sound diplomatic but she felt her excitement bubbling at the idea of spending time with Mike becoming a reality that would definitely happen.

"Really? Okay, great! I'll buy it today so you can't get out of it." El heard him laugh. He sounded relieved. "Will you buy your plane ticket soon? And seriously, I can help with that too. I wouldn't mind at all."

El thought there was no way she could let him purchase her airfare. "Maybe you could just buy me dinner when we're there. I can get the plane ticket."

They talked for the next couple of hours, Mike making El laugh so hard at one point that she couldn't breathe as he told her about a time on a roller coaster with his friend Dustin when they were kids. She didn't want the conversation to end but they both had some things they had to do before they could start their movie in a few hours so they said their goodbyes, knowing that they'd get to see each other via Skype soon.

El took a shower and made sure her hair looked nice. She was in the bathroom putting on a little makeup when Max came home. El had taken off work for the past two days to use some vacation time she had built up. She had too many extra days and they told her if she didn't use them she would lose them. She was happy that she would have a legitimate reason to use some vacation days when June rolled around.

"What are you up to, El? Why do you look so nice but are still in

pajamas?” Max asked.

“Mike and I are going to watch a movie in a little bit and we’re going to Skype while we do it. I wanted to look nice.” El stated.

“Talked to him again today, huh?”

“For hours. We have the same favorite band, we like the same shows, we have the Star Wars connection. It’s so weird, Max. I’m a little afraid I’m going to mess things up. I think I have a pretty big crush on him. He says he wants to buy my admission ticket to the Star Wars con. I’m going to buy a plane ticket today. I’m definitely going to go. I just worry that I’m going to get too in my head with it and fall madly in love and then get hurt before I ever meet him in person because I let myself get carried away. What if he doesn’t feel the same? What if I’m just someone he wants to be friends with?”

Max watched El nervously pick at her cuticles.

“Stop it, El. You’re going to make your fingers bleed. Just breathe. You need to just see where things go. You’re getting too far ahead of yourself and you’re worrying about things that are way in the future. You need to give yourself some credit. You are a cool chick. You’re freaking beautiful and you’re smart and any guy you’re interested in would be stupid to not want to be with you and only you. See how the movie goes tonight. See how the next few weeks go. If things are still fun and you still are feeling the same way about him, tell him. If he flirts with you, flirt back if you want to. Don’t be so quick to dismiss what you have to offer. I know I’m always saying play hard to get but if you really like him then do what you have to do to make yourself feel better about it. Just be honest with him.”

Max’s words were comforting in their straightforwardness. *Maybe Max is right. Maybe I need to go moment by moment and see where it takes me.*

Mike was online choosing which ticket to purchase for El. He wanted to give her the best experience he could. He knew she would probably protest if he tried to clear it with her so he made an

executive decision and purchased the Jedi Master VIP pass for her. He had already bought his earlier and he didn't want to buy her something lesser. He just wouldn't tell her how much he'd spent unless she asked. Maybe she wouldn't ask.

El was also online trying to decide on a plane ticket when she got a text. It was from Mike.

Don't book your flight until after you talk to me tonight. There are some things you need to know.

El was intrigued. What did he need to talk to her about? She waited on purchasing the airplane ticket, wondering why Mike would want her to hold off on doing that.

It seemed like time was moving so slowly. Every time El checked the clock it had only been maybe two minutes since she'd checked it last. It was 6:45 and she was anxious. She had already put her copy of *The Empire Strikes Back* in her DVD player and was sitting on her bed with her laptop waiting for Mike to call. She had added him into her Skype contacts earlier so all she had to do was be patient, but that was proving to be difficult.

At 6:55 she heard the beep of her laptop indicating that she was receiving a call through the Skype program. She took a deep breath and pushed "answer with video" on her laptop. Mike's face appeared. El changed the screen settings so that the box with her face in it disappeared, allowing her to see everything that Mike's webcam could see. He smiled at her.

"Hey! There you are. You look nice." Mike said. El could feel the blood rushing to her cheeks hearing his compliment while she was looking at him.

"Thanks, so do you." She could tell he was blushing as well. His grin made her heart flutter.

"Do you have your movie all ready to go?"

"I do and I've paused it where it says *A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...*"

"Perfect. I'm getting there. Okay, when I say go push play and we should be good. Are you comfortable?" Mike asked.

"Yes."

"Good. One, two, three, go."

They started the movie at the same time. Mike could tell immediately that their timing had been perfect because there was no lag or overlapping sounds. He had also changed his screen settings so he was only looking at El. Seeing her pictures had been one thing but seeing her on video was better than he'd imagined. He found himself looking at his computer screen more than watching the movie. He didn't mind.

El was doing the same. She liked looking at Mike and even though she tried to stay interested in the movie, he was somehow more interesting and she wasn't looking up from her computer screen to see the television much. She could hear it and she knew what was happening anyway. They kept grinning at each other for the first thirty minutes of the movie.

"What did you want to talk to me about? Why did you want me to wait to buy a plane ticket?" El asked when she finally realized that she had been staring at him, but also that he was staring at her with what was probably the same expression she was wearing.

"I, um, I bought you a ticket to the con today but I wanted to make sure you knew it was a five day thing so when you buy your plane ticket you give yourself enough time, and also so when you ask off from work you get enough days."

"It's five days?" El sounded surprised but in her head she was thinking, *five days with Mike!*

"Yeah, I forgot to mention that earlier. I mean, you don't have to go all five days but I had gotten that sort of ticket for myself so I wanted

you to have the same thing.”

“That sounds expensive. You didn’t go crazy and buy some \$500 ticket did you?”

Mike chuckled to himself. *It’s not a lie, I didn’t spent \$500. It was more but who cares?*

“No, not even close to \$500. We’re going to have so much fun! I wanted you to have the best experience possible.”

“Aww, that’s so sweet. I don’t know how to thank you, Mike. I’d hug you but I can’t reach you.”

“You can hug me in June. I expect you to.” He winked at her, his smile widening.

They managed to watch some of the movie before El asked a question.

“This morning, why did it take you thirty minutes to call me after I texted you?” El asked innocently.

She could see Mike’s face change and he looked embarrassed.

“Um, no reason. I was just kind of in the middle of something.” He answered.

“What were you doing?”

Mike sighed. *I can’t tell her what I was doing. She’ll think I’m disgusting.*

El looked at her screen. Mike’s eyes looked like they were pleading with her. “Mike, I wouldn’t judge you. You don’t have to tell me but you *can*. I feel like I could tell you anything so I want *you* to think the same about *me*.” El said encouragingly.

His voice was quiet but there was also a hint of sexiness. “I was, um. I had been having a really good dream, a sex dream I guess you could

say, before I woke up and I was kind of finishing what the dream version of myself had started.”

Oh. El tried to stop herself from smiling, remembering that he could see her. She put her hand over her mouth but he noticed.

“See? You’re laughing. I knew I shouldn’t have told you.” Mike sounded hurt.

“No, I’m not laughing, Mike. Ugh, I don’t want you to think *that*.”

“Then why did you cover your mouth and why are your cheeks red right now?” Mike asked, sounding slightly annoyed.

“I...well, fuck, I was just picturing it, okay? I’m sorry. It made me smile and I didn’t want you to think I was laughing at you because I certainly wasn’t smiling because I thought it was funny. It was an involuntary response to my own imagination.” El looked down.

Mike was smiling now. “You were picturing me doing *that*?”

“Shut up please.” El hid her face in her hands. Mike laughed.

“Come on, El. Look at me. Please? It’s okay. I think it’s kind of hot.” *I think it’s really hot.*

“What was your dream about?” *Really, El?!*

“Are you sure you want to know? I don’t want to embarrass you.” Mike said as he looked at his screen. He was looking right into her eyes.

“How could I be embarrassed by *your* dream?” El countered, her eyes also glued to his. There seemed to be an invisible strand linking them even though they were states away from one another.

“Because you were in it.” Mike whispered. He had looked away from her when he said it, clearly wanting to be honest but clearly a little embarrassed of what he had told her.

Oh. “Oh.” El’s voiced softened. “Well you said it was a good dream

so that's all that matters." She smiled at him and he felt better, noting the way her smile went all the way to her eyes and she wasn't just doing it for show.

They had reached the part of the movie where Han Solo had been captured by Boba Fett and was about to be frozen in carbonite. Both Mike and El watched raptly as Leia called out to Han just before he was frozen. When Leia called out to him El looked at her computer screen to see Mike looking back at her. They were both mouthing the lines of dialogue but when they looked at each other during that part the world felt hazy. El didn't feel like she could speak.

"Best part of the movie." Mike said, his voice low. He had looked back up at his television but only because he didn't want to make El feel uncomfortable.

They finished the movie and El thought he would want to go to bed so he would be ready for work the next day. Mike had a different idea.

"Why don't I call you and we can talk a little more as we fall asleep. It won't cost as much on the phone since we use the same carrier. If you don't want to that's okay though." Mike suggested.

El liked the idea. She liked hearing his voice directly in her ear. They ended their Skype call and El had time to brush her teeth and get ready for bed. Mike called about ten minutes later.

"This isn't weird is it?" He asked. They were both lying in their respective beds in different cities.

"Maybe, but I don't feel weird. I like talking to you." El found that the dim light of her room combined with lying in her bed in her quiet apartment while she talked to Mike made it seem almost intimate."

"Yeah, so do I. Your voice is soothing and I wanted to see what it would be like to fall asleep to you talking to me. Christ, I didn't mean to say that last part out loud. You must think I'm some sort of mouthbreather now."

"I don't. Your voice is nice too. I wonder which of us will fall asleep first?"

"You think my voice is nice?" Mike asked. "I never thought it was anything special."

You have no idea what hearing your voice does to me...what it's doing right now.

"It is nice. You have a nice timbre. It's a little bit dreamy." *Shit. I didn't mean to say that last part.*

"Dreamy? Dreamy. I can live with that. Thanks, El."

"I didn't mean to say that out loud. I think being here in the dark in bed listening to you is tearing down my inhibitions."

"I don't see anything wrong with that." Mike's voice had that sexy tone again and El was feeling warm.

"No?"

"Definitely not." El heard him yawn.

"Mike, close your eyes. It's late."

Mike did as she said. He listened to her as she outlined the upcoming days.

"Tomorrow I'll buy my plane ticket and it will be definite." Her voice sounded low and soft and was lulling him to sleep. "In the next few weeks we can decide if we'll want to dress up and who we'll go as if we want to do that. We can spend the next few months talking as much as you want. Thank you for everything."

El could hear his breathing on the other end. It was steady and he hadn't spoken for a few minutes. She could tell he was asleep. She started whispering.

"If I could be there I would kiss you goodnight. Sweet dreams,

Mike.”

Notes for the Chapter:

A/N: Okay, I've taken some liberties with this as the next Star Wars Celebration isn't until 2019 in Chicago but I didn't want them to have to wait that long so I've changed it for the story. I'm setting it up for them to have a little fun with the phone in an upcoming chapter since they're so far away. Just a heads up. There will be no pics or objectification of our beloved couple.

3. Chapter 3

El talked to Mike at least once a day, sometimes more, every day for the next month. One night in early March she called him and could hear other voices in the background.

“Did I interrupt something?” She asked.

“No, the guys are just in town and we’re all hanging out. They get loud occasionally. Want me to call you later tonight?”

“If it’s not too late you can. I don’t work tomorrow since it’s Saturday.” El replied, not wanting him to forego his friends for her.

“I’ll call you later.” His voice got more quiet, maybe so his friends wouldn’t hear him, “we can fall asleep.”

El bit her lip to keep herself grounded. “Okay,” was all she could muster.

When Mike hung up his phone he was inundated with questions from his friends.

“Who was that? Why do you look like a goof right now? Why are you smiling like a fool?” A chorus of queries hit him at once.

“Can you guys take turns? Jeez. I’ll tell you all about El.” Mike sat down and waited for the interrogation.

“El? Who is El?” Dustin asked first.

“I met her online on the Star Wars forum I moderate. She’s so awesome. She has a badass collection but *she* is even cooler. She lives in Maine though.” He frowned a bit.

“Do you like her? It looks like you do.” Will’s voice carried through the room as Mike thought about the physical distance between El and himself.

“Yeah, I do. I *really* do.”

“Does she know you do? You know how you have a tendency to assume things and then get upset when you mess up because of miscommunication. Don’t let that happen.” Lucas, always the one with the no-nonsense approach to things.

“I haven’t told her. We talk every day. She’s coming to the Star Wars convention with me in June. I even bought her ticket, though she doesn’t know what I spent on it.”

“Sorry I can’t make it this year, buddy. My schedule just doesn’t line up for that week.” Dustin apologized.

“Me too. The gallery is starting their biggest exhibit of the summer and I have to oversee everything, plus the pieces I’m restoring. I’ll be lucky if I get to come visit once all summer.” Will sighed.

“And I have a deadline to keep on that building I’m working on in Seattle. Things just didn’t work out this year for me in the Star Wars department.” Lucas added.

“You guys all have important things going on. I understand.” Mike didn’t want them to think he was too disappointed that they couldn’t go.

“Besides, it seems like with us not being there you can devote all of your attention to El, and that’s not a *bad* thing.” Dustin said, smiling but not in a teasing manner. He hadn’t seen Mike look so happy in a long time. “Wait, did you buy her the Jedi Master ticket? The one that’s like \$850?”

Mike looked at his feet. “Yeah.”

“Shit, dude! That is some serious coin! Really though, if you’re fine with spending that on her then you definitely need to make sure you’re on the same page. Don’t assume she knows anything about how you feel. She only knows what you tell her or what you *do*.” Lucas reminded him.

"I think dropping close to a grand on a ticket for a glorified toy show says a lot." Dustin quipped.

"He needs to tell her. Mike, you need to tell her if you have feelings for her." Will stated, always the wise one.

"I'm working on it. What we've got now is nice and I don't want to ruin it. What if she doesn't feel the same way?" Mike looked to his friends for answers.

"You say you talk every day. Is that in the daytime or at night? If it's at night, are we talking early evening or bedtime?" Will asked.

"We talk a couple of times a day or more and I try to call her at bedtime as well if I can."

"And what do you talk about during these late night phone calls, Mike?" Dustin asked as he opened a can of soda.

"Everything. Nothing. I like to hear her voice and she says she likes to hear mine. Sometimes we fall asleep talking."

"You don't have to give a lot of detail, but does it ever get sexual at all?" Lucas asked, genuine concern written on his brow.

"We flirt but we haven't like, requested that the other do something or offered to do anything. I wouldn't want to make any move like that unless I was sure she wanted to."

"Do *you* want to?" Will asked.

Fuck yes.

"Yeah. I think about it all the time. I don't want to talk about what I think about though. That's kind of just for me."

"We understand, Mike. We're just trying to help you sort out your feelings." Dustin was empathetic as he sipped his soda.

They talked about their lives until close to 11:30 and then everyone said goodnight to Mike and went their own ways. Mike brushed his teeth and went into his bedroom. He crawled into bed and called El.

“You weren’t asleep already were you?” Mike asked when she answered and sounded a little groggy.

“I’m up. I just dozed off for a minute.” El said sleepily.

“I can let you go back to sleep.”

“No, don’t. I’d rather talk to you. How were your friends?” El asked, perking up a little.

“They’re good. I think you’d like them. They’re great guys. Usually they try to make the cons too but their jobs aren’t being cooperative this year. So it will be just you and me.” Mike explained.

“Just me and thee.” El stated. Mike laughed.

“You’re such a word nerd,” he teased her.

“And you’re rhyming.” She was smiling.

“I guess so.” Mike was thinking about what his friends had said and it was on the tip of his tongue to start that conversation but he was scared. So he changed the subject. “What do you think we should dress up as for the con?”

She thought for a moment. “I know what I’d *like* to be but I don’t know if you’d want to. Were you wanting to be something with a mask?”

“That would be too hot to wear for a long period of time. I’d rather not have anything like that on my head.”

“Did you know that I can sew? I taught myself in high school when I needed some sewing done and I didn’t have a mom to help me and I couldn’t afford to have it professionally done. I could probably make us anything as long as I have enough time.”

“I’d like to see you in the bikini from *Return of the Jedi* but I wouldn’t want to share that vision with the world.” Mike snickered.

“Stop! I wouldn’t wear that in public. But just so you know, I would rock the shit out of that.”

Mike gulped. “I’m sure you would.” His words came out as a whisper.

El noticed his sudden inability to control his volume so she continued, “I like the outfit Leia wears when they’re on Bespin, the maroonish thing with the grayish robe? I think I could get my hair to do that without too much trouble too.”

“That would be so cool!” Mike had found his voice again. “Who would you want *me* to be?”

“You would let me choose? Even after buying my ticket and giving me a room?” El was surprised.

“Sure. We could take some great costume pictures together.”

“Would you be Bespin Han? I could make your costume. It would be worth it for the pictures.” El sounded hopeful.

“Would you have enough time? Because of course I’d be that but I wouldn’t want you to stress out over the costumes. You’d have two to do if you did mine.”

“Maybe I’ve already started on mine and maybe it’s almost finished.” El said playfully.

“You’ve got to let me see. Will you send me a picture of it some time? You don’t even have to wear it. Just lay it on your bed and *snap*.” Mike was picturing in his mind what she would look like in the costume but he wasn’t going to be a douche and ask her to send a pic of herself.

“Hmm, we’ll see.” She said seductively. It was killing Mike a little

bit, the way her tone would inflect.

They talked into the night, both wanting to say things and holding back, changing the subject when things got a little too close to where they really wanted them to go, neither of them confident enough to tell the other how they were feeling.

March became April and as April headed for May, Mike and El had continued to speak to each other as often as possible. When he was working and couldn't talk on his phone he would send her funny memes or links to songs he liked or wanted her to hear. She liked that he seemed to always be thinking about her, because she knew she was always thinking about him. El still hadn't told him she had developed feelings for him that were growing stronger every day.

She had almost finished his costume and remembered that he had once asked to see a picture of hers. She thought she'd do that when she was finished with his so he could see both. He had sent her his measurements back in March and she hoped it would fit him, though she planned to take a small sewing kit with her to the con to alter it if not. All she had to complete on Mike's part was sewing the stripes on the pants and adding the pocket flaps to the jacket. She had just finished the pants when Max came home from a cooking class she was taking.

"Wow, that's really looking good, El. Lucasfilm should hire you." Max admired the pants as El started on the pocket flaps of the jacket.

"I just want it to be as close to perfect as it can be. I want Mike to like it." El said, holding a pin in her mouth as she threaded her needle.

"I think he'll like anything you make, my dear. I think he really likes you and I've never even spoken to the boy."

"Then how would you know?" El asked, genuinely wanting to know.

“Do you guys just talk when you’re lying in bed at night? Because he keeps calling you and if you’re not doing anything other than talking then that makes me think he’s really into you. If it had only been going on for a week or so I’d say he was just trying to bide his time but this has been going on for months now so I think he is *definitely* into you.”

El considered this. She knew if an opportunity presented itself she would engage but she didn’t want to be the one to initiate things. They definitely got flirty a lot but maybe that was just the type of relationship they had. Or maybe she was misreading the whole thing and he really did share her feelings.

“Is it too late for me to tell him how I feel? Have I let it go on for too long?” El worried aloud.

“It’s never too late to be honest, El. You should call him tomorrow and talk to him about it.”

It was then that El’s phone buzzed. It was a text from Mike. He’d sent a picture.

Look at these boots! Aren’t they perfect Han boots?! I’m totally getting them right now!

El looked at the picture. The photo was of what she assumed was Mike’s lower leg. He was wearing the boots and had his pants stuffed into the tops of them. They *did* look just like Han’s boots. She was instantly as happy as he seemed to be in his text. She replied.

Those are bitchin’! I’m almost finished with your costume so your timing couldn’t be more perfect.

“You’ve got to tell him, El.” Max said again. “It might be the best thing you’ve ever done.”

El stayed up late that night until she had put the finishing touches on the costumes. She was actually proud of herself as she looked at both of them hanging on her closet door side by side. She was excited to see Mike in his. She took a picture but decided to send it to Mike

tomorrow. She was tired. She would usually call him if he didn't call her at night but she knew that he had to assist in a surgery really early the next morning and when he talked to her at night he tended to let Nighttime Mike make decisions that Daytime Mike might not appreciate.

The next morning El woke up with a sore throat. Her head was also hurting so she called in to work. Working at a University, she constantly heard not to go in if there was sickness because with all of the students also being there the faculty didn't need extra germs floating around. She found a throat lozenge in the drawer in the bathroom, made some hot tea, and went back to bed. A little before noon she remembered to text Mike the picture of the costumes.

I think it looks good enough for a scruffy looking nerfherder. ;-) I'm not feeling well today. Sore throat. I'm going back to bed.

Then she went back to sleep. She was asleep still when Mike replied to her.

Those look so amazing, El! You are such a badass! I hope to be home before 5:00. Call me later? I wish I could make you feel better.

When El woke up it was almost 6:00. She was surprised she'd slept so much. She was feeling a bit better but her voice sounded weird to her now, more throaty. She saw that Mike had texted her back earlier in the day. His words made her smile. *I wish you could make me feel better, too.*

She was lying in bed when she called Mike. It took him three rings to answer. She hoped she hadn't caught him at a bad time.

"Is now an okay time to call you?" El asked. Mike sounded slightly out of breath, like he'd been working out.

"Um, yeah, Now is okay. How are you feeling? Any better?"

"I feel better but I sound weird. Do you think I sound weird?" El asked. Mike was breathing funny.

"I think you sound kind of sexy. Will you talk to me?" He asked. His voice was low and if anything El thought *Mike* was the one who sounded sexy.

"What do you want me to talk about? What are you doing?"

"You can talk about anything. I've just had a long day and I'd like to relax and listen to you. Would that be okay?" El couldn't say no to him when he sounded like that. It was causing a physical reaction in her and she kind of liked it. Maybe she *really* liked it.

"Okay. I got the costumes all finished and I can't wait to see how they look on us. I used the measurements you sent. I hope everything fits you." El could hear him breathing. She finally realized what he was doing, but he hadn't come out and said it so she was going to act like she didn't know. She wanted to see what kind of reaction she would get.

"My costume definitely fits. It's tight around my waist and I won't wear a bra since she didn't wear one in the movie..."

El heard Mike stifle a groan. She tried not to giggle.

"The fabric is really soft though so I worry if the air conditioner is too cold that I might have some trouble with my nipples getting, you know, hard. I guess the robe I made might hide them if that happens..."

Mike's breath hitched. "Jesus, El." He whispered.

"Anyway, so I'm thinking that since it will be June and might be kind of hot I might not wear underwear at all. The dress is long. No one would know. It would be a fun secret."

"You'd be walking around totally naked under your costume." Mike said, more of a statement than a question. He was muttering.

"Yeah. You'd probably hate that, right? You wouldn't want your friend to be walking around naked under her costume, only a thin layer of fabric separating my body from the world at large." El was

enjoying herself.

“Mmmm. I might not hate it. It’s not like they’d know. Only *I’d* know.” His breathing was getting heavier.

“That’s right. Only *you* would know. And me. It would be our secret.” El was smiling, she could hear him gasp as she set the scene for him.

“You know we’ll have to get dressed together in the hotel room.” Mike was saying, his breathing still staggered.

“I know. Would that be a problem? If the bathroom is small we might have to share getting ready at the same time in the room. But we’re friends. I’m sure we can handle it if we see something we weren’t expecting. I’m sure you’ve seen a woman’s naked body before.”

“Oh, shit, El.” Mike could barely whisper.

“I do have a zipper in the back of my dress that I’ll need help with and if I don’t wear any underwear it won’t matter if I change in the bathroom or not because you’ll still see when you zip me up.”

She heard him release his breath sharply and then he took a few deep breaths in. It sounded like he had just run up ten flights of stairs.

“Are you okay?” El asked when his breathing had returned to somewhat normal.

“I’m fantastic.” He was smiling, she could tell by the way he sounded.

“Feel better?” Her tone implied that she knew what had just happened.

“What? Oh, I..um. Aw, damn.”

El laughed, which made Mike feel better. “It’s okay, Mike. Really. I promise.”

“I didn’t mean for that to happen. I mean, I totally meant for that to happen but I was already doing it when you called and I just wanted to hear you and I thought I could do it without you knowing. You knew? Why did you keep going?”

“I just felt like it. I wanted to hear you too.” El admitted.

“I feel kind of embarrassed now.” Mike sounded guilty.

“Mike, don’t be. You had a long day, your job can be stressful, I called in the middle. It’s really okay. Once I realized what was happening I wanted to help you. Did I?” She asked, she still sounded so sexy to him.

“You were awesome. I didn’t even know that you were doing that on purpose. I thought you were just talking. I’m sorry, El, but you are so super sexy. You have no idea. I just want you to know.”

“Thanks, Mike.” She whispered, her voice low and still clouded with hoarseness, making her sound more sultry than normal.

“Were you serious about your costume? About the underwear? Or was that just talk?” Mike wondered aloud.

“I was serious about that. So we’ll definitely have a secret when we’re there.” El replied. She actually hadn’t thought about it until then but once she’d said it she knew that’s how she wanted it to be.

“And what about the zipper thing?” Mike asked.

“I’ll need your help on that. I’ll need you to unzip it too when I’m ready to take it off.”

Holy fuck, she’s going to kill me with hotness. Mike exhaled as he thought about his fingers pulling the zipper of her dress slowly down her back, revealing her bare body.

“I’ll do whatever you want, El.”

Notes for the Chapter:

I have to go out of town for the weekend but I will update as soon as I can next week. I already know what will happen in the next chapter, just have to write it. It will be most definitely rated M. As always, thanks for reading and for reviews. May the Force be with you.

4. Chapter 4

El awoke early on Friday, May 4th hoping to catch Mike before he left for work. She texted him at 5:30 a.m. to tell him she was going to make a video call to him on Skype and to be ready. She just wanted to see his face. Almost immediately he texted her back and El noticed that even now after talking to him so often she still felt butterflies when she heard the ring tone that she had given him. It was a piece of The Force Theme that she had painstakingly cut to create the ring tone.

I have a few minutes before I have to leave for work. Call me now.

El got her laptop ready and made the call. When she saw Mike's face on the screen she couldn't help but melt a little. Looking at him was always better.

"I know you have to go soon but I wanted to be the first to tell you *May the 4th be with you.*" El's smile matched Mike's as he looked back at her.

"May the 4th be with you, El. I wish we could be together today. We could watch a marathon of movies. I have a long day ahead of me though." Mike sighed.

"I know. That's why I wanted to catch you early. Will you call me tonight when you get home?"

"Sure. Can you believe a nurse named Valerie asked me out?" Mike asked, he was smiling and El felt like she had been kicked in the gut.

"Really?" She tried to sound and look like she wasn't bothered, knowing that he could see her.

"Yeah, weird, huh? Anyway, I'm going to go out with a couple of people from work for drinks but I don't expect to be home really late. I'll call you then, okay?" Mike still seemed oblivious to El's disappointment, though to her credit she was trying her best to hide it.

“Okay, Mike. I hope you have a good day.”

Mike noticed something was off. “El, are you okay?” When he looked at her with such concern she could always feel her heart beat wildly against her chest.

“I’m fine, Mike. I’m great. I’m off today so I’m just going to watch movies and maybe sleep. Have fun after work. I’ll talk to you when you can.” She tried her best to smile.

Mike wasn’t totally buying her act. “You’d tell me if something was wrong, right, El? I have to leave now but please text me if you need to talk about anything.” Mike was saying.

Except when I’m with Valerie the nurse, El thought, immediately feeling guilty for thinking like that when she had never even told Mike how she felt.

“I will, Mike. I’ll talk to you tonight if you get a chance to call. Have a great day. I’ll let you go to work.” She smiled at him for real, loving how his face looked when she smiled at him, how his eyes would soften and his lips would curl up until he was grinning at her.

The call ended and El let herself feel sick. She didn’t want to think about Mike going out with anyone. *She* wanted Mike and she hadn’t told him and now she was paying the price. She paced around the apartment until Max woke up.

When Max finally *did* wake up El was moping on the sofa eating straight from a pint of Ben and Jerry’s Americone Dream ice cream. At least when she looked at Stephen Colbert on the carton it made her smile somewhat and she like the pieces of waffle in the ice cream.

“What’s wrong with you?” Max asked as she filled her mug with coffee.

“Mike has a date tonight. At least, that’s how it sounded.”

“You’ve already talked to him today? It’s like, barely 8:00, El.”

“We Skyped this morning before he left for work because today is May the 4th.” El sounded depressed.

“So? What’s the big deal about that?” Max asked, clearly not as into Star Wars as her roommate.

“May the 4th...*May the 4th be with you?* It’s a clever play on words. I know it’s nerdy but I’ve never had anyone to say that to who really understood before.”

“Yep. That’s totally nerdy. So you still have never told him how you feel? El, I thought you were going to do that weeks ago.” Max sat down beside El.

“I know but I didn’t and now here I am.”

“Why don’t you text him and tell him to call you when he has a little free time today? I’m sure he’ll get a break for lunch or something.” Max suggested, hoping El would listen to her advice.

“I’m scared now because he said a nurse named Valerie asked him out and then he said he was going out for drinks tonight. I think I missed my chance, Max.” El buried her face in her hands.

“I’m sorry, El. If he does call tonight, please tell him how you feel. You need to be honest with him so you know you did everything you could. I have to get ready for work. Are you going to be fine here today?” Max stood and started toward her room to find clothes for the day.

“I’ll be fine. I’ll just watch movies like I’d planned.”

“Well try not to think about it too much. Maybe you misunderstood. Talk to him, El. That’s the only way.”

El decided to go to her room and go back to sleep for a while. She had been so excited when her day started and now it felt like her world had changed. She blamed herself for not telling Mike how she felt. She kept imagining what the nurse looked like, imagining how

Mike looked at her and if he'd want to kiss her. It made El's stomach hurt.

Mike felt like something had shifted during his morning Skype session with El. She had seemed so happy and then her voice changed and he could tell she was trying to smile but it wasn't reaching her eyes. He thought back to their entire conversation and couldn't come up with any reason that she might have changed her demeanor. When he got a chance he texted her a funny meme of Han and Leia, Han was in the carbonite chamber and he said *I love Star Wars* and Leia said *I know*. Mike thought it was funny because it was reversed. Really, though, he wanted to make her think of the actual dialogue in that scene. *I really need to tell her how I feel*, he thought. He didn't have time to call her right then though. He decided he would tell her that night. It had been long enough and he couldn't keep flirting and pretending.

It was an hour later when El texted him back. When she'd seen his text she had almost cried because she immediately thought *I love you* but she didn't think she had the right to be upset so she held back her tears. She sent back a simple smiley face and a LOL.

Mike had been in surgery when he got the text. When he got a chance to read it he felt sad. He had wanted her to be more excited but her text seemed flat, like she was just being nice. He worried until his shift was finally over at 5:30. He was going out for drinks with a couple of coworkers but only because he had promised them weeks ago. They also liked Star Wars and wanted to celebrate. Mike wasn't really into it but he was a guy who kept his promises. When he got to the bar he sent El another text.

I'm at the bar. I'll call you as soon as I get home, okay?

He ordered a drink while he waited. His coworkers had gotten there earlier and were already well on their way to being drunk. Mike just wanted to have a drink with them so he could keep his obligation and then go home. He really wanted to talk to El. She finally texted back. He was almost finished with his drink.

If you want. I don't want to get in the way of other things you might want

to do. Have fun.

Mike stared at his phone. What did she mean by that? He texted her back. He would have called but it was loud in the bar.

Please wait up for me to call. I won't be too late. I promise.

It was El's turn to be confused. Why would he want her to wait up to talk to him when he had a pretty nurse to entertain? She couldn't neglect him though. Her heart wouldn't let her. So she wrote him back.

I'll be up.

Mike said goodbye to his colleagues and headed for home. He just wanted to talk to El. Before he drove away he texted her once more.

Can I Skype with you?

He was slightly disappointed when she wrote back.

Just call me.

When he got home it was a little after 8:00. He hadn't meant to stay at the bar for as long as he had but the service was a little slow and he wanted to get his thoughts together before he talked to El. He wasn't going to leave anything to chance anymore. He wanted to tell her exactly how he felt about her. He hadn't wanted to do it over the phone but he'd take what he could get. He took off his pants and shirt and got comfortable. He loved talking to her from his bed, it made it feel more like she was right next to him. He called her. He was actually feeling *nervous*.

When she picked up he noticed that she sounded down.

"El, what's wrong? Are you okay?" Mike was worried.

"I'm fine. How was your date? Valerie I think her name was?" El tried to sound more excited. She wasn't selling it well.

“What do you mean?”

“Valerie. I’m sure she’s pretty. Does she like Star Wars? I hope you had a good time. Why are you back so soon? Is she so special that you’re taking it slow?” El’s words were nice but her tone was one of hurt and jealousy.

“Date? I didn’t have a date. I had promised these guys from work that I’d have a drink with them to celebrate May the 4th because they know I like Star Wars and they like it too. They asked a long time ago so I went. You thought I had a date?”

“You told me this morning that a nurse named Valerie had asked you out and then you said you were going out for drinks so I thought it was with her. So I was wrong?” El asked, her voice had softened upon hearing him be so clueless as to what date she was referring.

“I just told you that because I thought it was funny. El, I’m sorry you thought I meant I was going out with her. Don’t you get it? Well, no, of course not because I’m a mouthbreather who has never told you. I wouldn’t want to go out with anyone who isn’t *you*.”

“What?” El whispered.

“You, El. I really like you. You’re probably my best friend and I want to talk to you in the morning and before I fall asleep and I think about you all the time. I mark the days off on the calendar every day counting down to when I’ll get to see you. I wouldn’t go out with anyone else. I’m only looking forward to spending time with *you*. And it’s thirty-four days now, almost thirty-three because today will be over soon.”

El couldn’t speak. She had spent the entire day thinking that she had missed her chance to tell Mike how she felt about him and now he was telling her he felt the same, and after she had been snippy with him over a misunderstanding that had been *her* fault.

“El, are you still there?” She heard Mike ask.

“I’m here, Mike. I’m so sorry.” She was almost crying, a half sob

escaping as she felt relief wash over her.

“What are you sorry for?” Mike asked, thinking she was apologizing for not sharing his feelings.

“Because I didn’t tell you how I felt and then I misread things and was short with you because I was jealous. But everything you just said is exactly how I feel about you too. I should have talked to you about it a long time ago. Mike, I can’t wait to see you.” The relief and desperation in her voice was evident.

“Were you jealous all day? I didn’t mean to make you feel that way, El. I shouldn’t have even said anything about her. I was never going to go out with her.” Mike thought about how El must have felt all day, thinking about how *he’d* feel if he thought *she* was going out with someone. The idea made his stomach knot up and he felt sad that he had made her feel that way, if even accidentally.

“Yes, actually. When you told me about her asking you out I felt like I’d been punched but I couldn’t let you know because I had never said anything about my feelings.”

Mike winced upon hearing her say she felt like she’d been punched. He needed to try to make her laugh. “Feelings? So like, you like me more than like?” He was grinning.

“You don’t have to make it sound like we’re in middle school, Mike.” She scolded him but he knew she was smiling again.

Mike laughed softly. “I know, El. I was just kidding you.” Then he got more serious. “I wish you were here with me.”

“So do I.” He could hear her shift. “I’d really like that.”

“Where are you right now?” Mike asked.

“I’m lying in my bed. It’s dark in here except for a lightsaber wall sconce that changes color. It’s red right now.” Her voice sounded so sexy to Mike.

“Are you wearing your pajamas?” He asked.

El was starting to feel turned on listening to his voice, lowered for her, like they were telling secrets in the dark.

“Not really pajamas. It’s just a short nightgown. I didn’t want to wear pajama pants tonight. It’s too warm.” El replied.

“What color is it?”

El caught on. “You want me to describe my nightgown to you? What purpose would that serve?” She asked coyly.

“I want to imagine what you look like in it.” Mike said, sounding determined and making El feel tingly.

“It’s black with thin shoulder straps and it’s satin, maybe silk? I don’t know, the tag is in the back. There’s lace on the part that covers my breasts.” El told him. “What are *you* wearing?”

Mike had never heard her sound so seductive before, even when she had talked to him while he was getting off last month without him realizing that she was trying to help him. He was picturing her nightgown in his mind and he was getting harder by the minute listening to her.

“I’m just wearing my boxers. They’re gray plaid. They’re probably not as sexy as what you’re wearing. You know I’ve thought about talking to you like this for so long. I just was too afraid you wouldn’t want to talk to me anymore.” Mike admitted.

“Talk to me like how? Like ask me what I’m wearing when I’m lying in bed? What else did you think about asking me?” El tempted him.

“I, um, I wondered what kind of panties you were wearing and what it would be like to be able to ask you.”

“You can ask me, Mike. I don’t mind.” She was driving him wild with her alluring tone.

“Well, what kind of panties are you wearing, El?” He whispered to her.

“They’re black too. I think they’re called cheeky panties? Maybe. They show a lot of my ass cheeks when I look in the mirror. They’re lacy around the edges. But I’m not wearing a bra. I don’t like to sleep in them. What else did you want to know?”

“What do you think about when you’re lying in bed? Do you ever think about me?” Mike asked. He had shifted his phone to his left hand.

He could tell El was smiling. “That’s kind of personal, don’t you think?”

Mike was about to apologize when El spoke again, “I wonder what you look like when you’re touching yourself and if you’re ever thinking of me. Since the night I heard you on the phone and kept talking to you I’ve thought about it a lot. Do you ever think of me?”

“El, I *only* think of you anymore. I’m thinking about you right now.”

“What are you thinking about doing to me?” She whispered.

Mike’s voice got even lower. “I’ve gotten so hard talking to you during this phone call that I’m having to touch myself to relieve some pressure. I’m imagining that you were doing it instead. Is that okay?”

El felt relieved. She was also turned on and was about to have to discard her panties because they were so wet.

“Yes. If it’s okay that I do the same. I’m turned on too. I need some relief as well.”

“If I was there I would help you.” Mike’s breath was starting to hitch occasionally.

“How would you help me? Maybe you could tell me what you would do and I could do that to myself.” El teased.

“I’d touch you after I slowly removed your panties.”

“Mike, I already took them off.”

Oh, fuck. She’s not going to let me last.

“Then touch yourself, El. Close your eyes and imagine it’s me.”

“What are you doing though, Mike?” She asked, having moved her hand between her legs.

“I’m pretending my hand around my cock is actually *yours* and I’m imagining you slowly stroking me up and down.”

“Tell me what you’re doing to me while I stroke your cock. My hand is gentle but firm and every now and then I kiss the tip.”

“Shit, El, hold on. You’ll get me too worked up. I want to make sure you get what *you* want. First I’d tease you by barely letting my fingers slide over you.”

“Okay. I can imagine that.” She sighed contentedly.

“If we were together we could do more than just touch ourselves. I don’t think I’d want to stop at that. Would you, El?”

“No. I think after a little while I’d want to feel you for real.”

“Too bad we can’t do that now.”

El remembered what was in the drawer of her nightstand. She never used it but it now might be a good time.

“Mike, what if we pretended?”

“What do you mean, El?”

“You can tell me everything you’d want to do to me, like how you’d want to touch me, and then I can use this vibrator I have and we can

time ourselves so it's like we're together. I never use it but it could maybe work. We're both so turned on already. Every time you stroke yourself you can imagine you're thrusting into me and I'll be doing that with this thing, and it will be almost like we're together."

"You have a vibrator? Are you using it?" Mike couldn't believe it.

"It was a gift from a bachelorette party I went to a couple of years ago. I never use it. I'm not totally sure how." She was saying.

"Turn it on and tell me what happens." Mike instructed.

El did as he had told her. The base was a round knob and the farther around she turned it the more the entire thing vibrated. She explained it to Mike.

"Okay, turn it on just some and put it between your legs but not inside. Just position is so you can feel the vibrations on as much of you as possible. Close your eyes and imagine it's my cock resting between your lips. Feel the weight? Does it feel good?" Mike asked. In his mind, the image of her doing that was forming as he listened to the sounds she made.

"Uh huh. I can feel you." She said.

"Good. Now move it up and down in your slit, still not putting it inside you. Where does it feel best, El?"

"Near the top but it all feels good, Mike." She was whispering, breathing heavy at the sensation between her legs, gasping softly occasionally.

"Is it making you wet, El?" Mike asked. He was stroking himself very slowly, wanting to wait until he had instructed her further to really get into his own pleasure.

"I'm already so wet. I need to feel more, Mike."

Mike was loving hearing her describe how she was feeling. He was thinking he wanted to hear this every day. "Okay, I want you to put

just the tip inside. Imagine you're looking down and watching me slowly slip myself inside you. Are you doing it?" Mike imagined doing what he had just said. In his mind he could see her lying there underneath him.

"Yes." She was panting now.

"Good. Now feel me slide in more. I want to slide all the way in but I want you to do it at your own pace. Tell me when you can feel me all the way inside you. I want to be there, El."

El slid the vibrator all the way inside her. The vibrations caused her to clamp her teeth down. She had never felt anything like it.

"Okay. Mike, that feels so good. I want to move it."

"I know, let's do that. Pull it out and push it back in. Let me hear all the sounds you make when you do it. I'm right here with you." He was whispering and stroking slowly until he could hear her rhythm and get in sync with her.

As El pushed it inside, Mike pulled back on his cock. El was moaning and Mike was too, both imagining that what they were feeling was being caused by the other and not by themselves.

"Does that feel good, El? Can you feel me all the way inside you?"

Uhn...yes, Mike" She panted. "It feels *so good!*"

"Good. El, I'm really close. Thinking about what it would feel like to really be inside you is going to make me come. Can you push that as far in as it will go? Turn the knob to full power. I want you to come when I do."

El pushed the vibrator all the way in. She couldn't help but buck her hips into it.

"Oh, it's in Mike. I want to push into it more. Can I please?"

Hearing her beg like that when she had complete control of her own

body made Mike's vision tunnel.

"Yes," he breathed. "Do whatever you need to do. If it feels good to move into it then do it. Are you close?"

"I think so. Mike! It feels so good, I can feel it coming!" El was sweating on top of her bed as she squeezed her legs together and pushed the vibrator in even more.

"I can too, El. I'm going to come now. Thinking about you fucking yourself with that vibrator is so hot that I can't hold it in anymore." He growled lowly.

"Oh, now! Mike!" She couldn't speak any more as she felt the intensity of her climax hit her.

"El!" Mike joined her, his eyes closed, picturing the girl he thought of most in her moment of bliss.

They could hear each other breathing and panting. "That felt really good. I wish it had been real though." El said, her breathing still heavy.

"I know. I do too. El, I don't want to assume anything because we did that just now but I don't know how I'll react when I see you in a few weeks. I don't want to get ahead of myself and think we'll do this all the time but I really enjoyed it and I can't help it, I want more. I don't want you to be caught off guard if I act weird when I finally get to see you."

"I'm so excited for next month. I don't want you to warn me or try to explain anything. I like you and I liked what we just did and I have my own fantasies about how it will be to spend five days with you. I want to fall asleep talking to you in the next bed over from me instead of on a phone a thousand miles away. I want a lot of things." El thought aloud.

"What kinds of things?" Mike asked, amusement in his voice.

"You'll see in thirty-three days." El was smirking on the other end of

the line but Mike couldn't see. "There's so much I want to do. Maybe there's so much I'll let you do."

"Oh yeah?" Mike was sitting up in bed now, very intrigued at the idea of El letting him do whatever he wanted. That must mean she *wanted* him to.

"Yeah." She whispered.

They fell asleep not long after, both feeling momentarily sated by their activities but also both feeling so relieved that they had finally given in and admitted their feelings. There was more to the admission for both of them but for now and over the phone, the terms *feelings* and *like* would have to do. Some things needed to be said in person. They could say that in another month.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm not totally happy with this chapter but I'm hopeful the next couple will be better. I was really excited to write it and then my life kicked me down so I felt like I forced some of this. But maybe some is okay. I will not let the convention part have anything I'm not 100% happy with. Thanks for reading, as always.

5. Chapter 5

El stared at her calendar. It was now only two weeks until she would get to see Mike and have what she hoped would be the time of her life at the Star Wars convention with him. She had examined the entire website dedicated to the con and was well aware of what Mike had spent on her ticket, but she would chastise him for that in person. She felt touched that he would do that for her without ever having met her. Mike was a special guy.

It was early evening. El had worked late and was now waiting for Max to get home with dinner, which would most likely be pizza. El's phone rang.

"Hey, Dad! What's up?" El's voice seemed happier than usual.

"Hey, kid. How's my girl? You sound happy." Her dad laughed.

"I guess I am. Dad, I kind of met somebody. He's... he's really awesome."

"What do you mean *kind of met*?"

"Well, I met him online but I've never actually met him in real life yet. We're both going to a Star Wars convention in a couple of weeks. He even bought my ticket. I'm flying to Indianapolis the morning of June 6th."

"Online? El, I don't know that I like that. He could be *anyone*. Are you sure you know who you're talking to?" El's father, the Chief of Police in Kennebunkport, Maine, sounded very wary.

"I'm sure he's who he says he is. We've Skyped and we talk every day, dad. If you want, if it will make you feel better, I can give you his name and you can do a background check on him. He's the most amazing person ever though, so that's all you would find out."

"That sounds like a good idea. What's his name and where is he from? How old is he. You don't have his Social Security Number do

you?”

“Dad! No, but I’ll tell you what I know. His name is Michael Wheeler and he’s 26 years old. He’s from Hawkins, Indiana, and he went to school at Northwestern. Graduated in 2012 because he’s super smart and doubled up on his classes. I guess let me know if he turns out to be a serial killer but I’m not sure I’ll care at this point.”

“That bad, huh?” El’s dad snickered.

“So bad, Dad.” El felt herself smile just because she was thinking of Mike.

“Okay, I’m still going to see about this guy though, El. I can’t be too careful with my little girl. Is Max going to take you to the airport? Do I need to drive up and make sure you get there?”

“I’ll be fine, Dad. Max will drop me off and I’ll take a taxi to the hotel once I get to Indianapolis.” El informed her father.

“I want you to text me at least every other day while you’re there. And how long will you be there? I want to see pictures of this convention. I like Star Wars.”

“I know. The convention is June 7th through 11th but I’m flying in on the 6th so I can get settled and get my convention badge and I’m sure there will be lines for that. I don’t want to spend the first day of the con standing in line to pick up my ticket. Oh! Max had the coolest idea. I’ll send you a pic when we get off the phone and show you what we did with your Star Wars figures. She was at her wit’s end with them sitting around everywhere, citing them collecting dust, and had the best idea of what to do with them. I think it’s really cool.”

“I can’t wait to see it. I’m serious about that background check though so I’m going to get that going now. If I do find something off, I want you to reconsider this trip, El. I don’t know what I’d do if something happened to you. I’ll call you when I get the results.”

“Okay, Dad, but I believe what he says. I think you’ll be happy with

who he is.” El looked up as Max walked in with their pizza. “Dad, Max just got home with dinner. I love you and I’ll talk to you soon.”

“Right, kid. I’m going to see who this Michael Wheeler actually is. Love you too.”

El rolled her eyes. “Bye, Dad.” She quickly texted him the lamp picture before helping Max get plates and drinks.

As the girls sat on the sofa with their food, Max spoke first.

“So I guess you and Mike are on the same page now?” She asked.

“What do you mean?” El sprinkled Parmesan cheese on her pizza.

Max swallowed. “I wasn’t eavesdropping, I swear, but when I went to the bathroom the other night I passed your room and I heard you, um, well, you weren’t just talking.”

El’s face reddened. Ever since the first time they’d had phone sex they couldn’t keep themselves from messing around at least a little every night that they talked, which was almost every night.

“Yeah, you could say we’re on the same page. We both wish we were closer. It’s the only thing we can do, Max. It’s so frustrating being so far away from him. I’m kind of scared of what it’s going to be like for me when the con is over and I have to come home after spending a week with him. I’m dreading it already and I still haven’t even ever touched him.”

“I’ve thought about that too. I mean, if I was in the same situation. That’s tough. He has a great job from what you’ve told me but you want to work in the library at UMaine, you always have, so I don’t know what you should do. Maybe it’s another one of those things where you just have to take one step at a time and see where the path leads.”

El chewed her food in silence. She knew Max was probably right. She wouldn’t get to talk to Mike tonight because he was on a long shift and she didn’t want to make him lose concentration. She would

talk to him tomorrow, he was always home on Friday nights.

“Max, do you think this whole thing is crazy? Do you think something like this could ever work out? We live in different states, we’ve never met in person, is it all a fantasy? Am I just wanting it so much that I’m missing the big picture?” El asked her friend.

Max was thoughtful for a moment, “I think that the way things are today, distance isn’t as much of a problem. Technology has brought the world closer together. We’re not a bunch of countries vying to be the best, despite what our government would have us believe. We’re one world, one people, one collective working together to make our lives better. We can have friends in other countries who we might be closer with than our own family, we can meet the best people online and share ideas, we have information at our fingertips and don’t have to rely on superstitions passed down by our parents because we can research from scores of scholars and come to our own conclusions. I think being a few states away won’t be a problem for you if you both really want it. You will find a way.”

El hoped that Max was right. Before she went to sleep that night she sent Mike a text. He might not get to respond until almost noon the next day but she still wanted him to know she was thinking about him.

I’m going to bed now. I hope you can get some rest tomorrow. I know you have a busy day but then you can relax. Call me when you get in? It will be May 25th in a couple of hours. The real Star Wars Day! I can’t wait to see you, Mike.

El went to sleep with a smile on her face thinking about what the convention would be like.

Around 2:00 the next day, which was Friday, May 25th, El was at work when she got a text from Max.

Good thing I’m home today because you just got a delivery that I’m going to have to put in the fridge. You also got a package.

El hadn't ordered anything. She couldn't think of what it might be so she asked.

What is it? I still have three hours of work.

Max sent back her reply.

I'm not saying. I think you should just see when you get home. Have fun with your overactive imagination! :-)

El pouted in frustration. Max had done that on purpose, knowing that El wouldn't be able to stop guessing what might be waiting for her at home. She watched the clock slowly tick away the minutes. At 4:30 she asked her supervisor if she could leave a few minutes early since she was caught up on her work and it was Friday. She was granted her leave, feeling elated that she was on her way home and would get to talk to Mike later.

When she arrived at home Max was in the kitchen. She looked at El with a smirk on her face.

"Look in the refrigerator. There's a card too."

El opened the door of the refrigerator. Sitting on the middle shelf where there was more space height-wise was a bouquet from Edible Arrangements. El could see pineapple slices shaped like suns, watermelon skewers, kiwi, blueberries, chocolate covered strawberries, and she didn't know what else. It took up almost the entire shelf. There was a card attached so she took it off and read it.

Thinking of you, I am, on this the real Star Wars Day. I can't wait to see you. Love, Mike

"We had a thing like that for one of our corporate luncheons and I saw the bill. He spent a lot on that fruit, El."

El was still speechless. She knew that the *Love, Mike* part was probably just customary but it made her feel warm inside to see it written. And she loved fruit. Had they even talked about that? She couldn't remember.

“You got this too. Though it’s probably just coincidence. Have you ordered anything?” Max handed El a package in a medium sized Amazon box.

“I don’t remember ordering anything recently.” El turned the package over in her hands. It wasn’t particularly heavy.

“Well open it and see.” Max was like a kid on Christmas morning, even her eyes were sparkling.

El carefully used the box cutter they kept in the junk drawer in their kitchen to cut through the tape on the box. As she opened it she saw a piece of paper folded in half on the top. Her excitement getting the best of her, El quickly removed the items in the box, momentarily forgetting the slip of folded paper. She held in her hands two different action figure sets. One was old, like from the late ‘90s and was Han Solo and Princess Leia in their Bespin outfits. Han was a little more buff than in reality but El really liked that it was the costumes she and Mike were going to wear. The other set was newer, it was Han and Leia from *A New Hope* and the set had been released as part of *The Force Awakens* toys. The sculpts were much better, but they should be since the figures were twenty years newer than the other set.

El finally looked away from the toys in her hands and saw the piece of paper sitting on the table beside the opened Amazon box. She set the figures down so she could read the note.

El,

I saw these and wanted you to have them. I can’t think about Han and Leia anymore without thinking of you. I planned for you to get them on May 25th so I hope you did. I wish I could have given them to you myself but I hope they made you smile. You make me smile, and I’m a scoundrel. But I’m a scoundrel who can’t wait to see you in twelve days.

*Love,
Mike*

El immediately grabbed her phone and texted Mike.

I got your gifts. Mike, I LOVE them! You are the best! Call me as soon as you can tonight, okay?

El and Max munched on the fruit as El admired her new action figures. A little while later El took a shower and got ready for bed. It was still a bit early for sleep but sleep wasn't what she was planning on. Mike called her around 8:00 and they talked until the wee hours of the morning. By 3:15 a.m. they had done everything they could do over the phone line and were both wishing they could be holding each other for real.

"I can't wait to see you." El whispered. It seemed right to do so since it was so late and the apartment was so quiet otherwise.

"I'm glad you're coming in on the 6th. Want me to pick you up at the airport? I kind of want to." Mike said.

"You *kind of* want to?" El kidded him.

"Okay, I *really* want to. I know I can't be at the gate but I'd love to meet you when you get into town. We could do one of those sappy airport meetings where you jump into my arms." Mike chuckled.

El could imagine that. The idea of jumping into his arms upon seeing him was tantalizing.

"You can pick me up then. I'll text you the details but I'm on Delta flight DL4036. I'm going to have a layover in New York for the better part of the day and it doesn't look like I'll make it to Indianapolis until 6:23 p.m. if everything goes according to schedule. Ugh. I wish it could be a nonstop flight."

"It'll be okay, El. I'll pick you up and we'll still have the whole evening. Maybe we could get some dinner."

"I was hoping to pick up my ticket and stuff so I don't waste the first day standing in line." El sounded disappointed.

"I'll take care of it, El. I ordered it so I have to be there to pick it up anyway. I'll have it done before I come get you and we won't have to worry about anything. I promise."

El loved it when Mike said he promised. He always sounded so confident and sincere.

"Okay, Mike. I like it when you promise me."

"Stay on the line and fall asleep with me?" Mike asked.

"I'd like that."

They listened to each other breathing, having said goodnight after going back and forth for five minutes arguing about who would say goodnight last. Mike had finally given in and let El win, hearing her say *'night, Mike* and feeling his own butterflies.

June finally began and even though summer in Maine was beautiful El couldn't stop wishing she was in Indiana of all places. She had less than a week before she would leave for the convention.

On the third day of June, El's father called with the results of the background check he'd done on Mike.

"I know all about him, El." He sounded stoic.

El was instantly worried. "What did you find?"

"Well, he graduated second in his class at Northwestern in 2012. He was the valedictorian of his high school class in Hawkins, Indiana. He helped organize a blood drive after the 2008 flood in Indiana when he was a junior in high school. Got certified as an Anesthesiologist Assistant from Emory University in Atlanta and then moved back to Indiana where he works at Indiana University Academic Health Center. He moderates a Star Wars forum on Rebelscum.com and currently lives alone. I hate to say it, but I think you've found yourself one of the good ones, El."

El beamed with pride after hearing Mike's accomplishments. She had known he was who he said he was but there were some things he hadn't mentioned and her feelings for him were growing even stronger than she'd ever imagined.

"I told you so." El almost whispered.

Later that night El called Mike. She was still feeling awestruck from hearing her father describe what he'd found out about the man she couldn't stop thinking about. He answered quickly.

"In three days we'll be together." El was already letting her voice do that thing she knew Mike liked so much.

"Three days. That's like 70 hours now. I'm counting," Mike said. "You sound so good to me."

"Yeah? I like it that you like my voice."

"I like your *everything*." Mike offered.

El was feeling mischievous. "Mike," she purred, "do you want to video chat right now? Because I do."

Mike was more than willing to video chat with her. He had wanted to for a while but didn't want to be the one to suggest it.

"Yes, so much."

"Call me then. I'm waiting," El breathed, hanging up the phone right after she instructed him to call her.

When Mike called El could see his entire bed from where he had set his laptop. He was sitting near the headboard but she could still see him as though she was sitting on the bed herself.

"Hey." He said.

"Hi. Should I put my computer like you have yours? Can you see me?" El asked. She had wanted to see him like this for the first time

when they were actually together but she couldn't wait anymore. This would have to do.

"Yeah." His eyes were locked on her. "I like what you're wearing."

Mike was shirtless, wearing only some black boxer briefs, and El could see his chest. He was built like a runner, thin and toned. She thought he looked sexy in the tight boxers.

"I like what you're wearing too. Or *not* wearing." El smiled.

"Will you show me what you do when we talk at night?" Mike asked. El could see that the bulge in his boxers was already starting to grow.

"You want to see me touch myself?" She asked, a smile forming on her lips.

"Uh huh. I want to see what your face looks like when you do it."

"Well I have to take these off first." El stood up on her knees and pushed her panties down, making sure to do it slowly to tease him. She sat back and removed them from her ankles. From where she had set her computer, she knew Mike could see *everything*. "Is that okay?" She asked.

"You are so beautiful, El. Fuck. Show me what you do."

El slowly moved her hand down until she was covering herself with her palm. She could see Mike watching her so she spread her legs a little wider than she normally would so he could see better. She watched his eyes follow her fingers as she ran them up and down the outside of her lips. "I like to start slow and listen to what you say. You know your voice turns me on so much." She said as she continued to play with herself.

"Does it? Do you like it when I tell you what to do to yourself?" He asked, fire kindling behind his eyes.

El saw him push his shorts down. It was the first time she had

actually seen him and she felt another wave of lust run through her. He was *exactly* how she had hoped. She licked her lips without realizing it.

“I do like it.” She whispered. Her fingers had moved more inside her and she was gently rubbing circles, feeling how wet she was getting from just talking to him.

“Let me see you do it. Make yourself feel good while I watch you, El. I will too. You make me so hard.” He was slowly stroking his cock. El watched his hand move slowly down the shaft and then back up. She wanted to be the one doing it. *Soon*, she thought.

El tried to keep her eyes on Mike’s as she slipped one and then two fingers inside her, keeping her thumb in place where she liked it. After a couple of minutes though she had to close her eyes and throw her head back against her pillow as the sensations were too overwhelming to maintain eye contact with Mike. She could hear him though as she kept pumping her fingers into herself.

“That’s it, El. You look so sexy doing that. I wish I was there to do it for you. I want to kiss you so bad.”

El looked back up at him. He was staring at her with a look of wonder on his face. She could see him massaging his cock, could see how it would twitch occasionally. It looked to her like she could put both of her fists around it, one on top of the other, and still there would be three inches extra. She wondered what that would feel like.

“Mike,” El uttered, “I think I’m going to want to do this for real in a couple of days. Would that be okay with you?”

“Are you kidding, El? It will take all of my willpower to not throw you on the bed as soon as we walk into the hotel room. I want you so bad.” Mike continued to pump his shaft as El worked her fingers.

“I want you do to that. Promise me you’ll do that. Oh, I *need* you to do that, Mike.” Her breathing was getting heavier and she was whispering, all her energy focused on her hand and imagining what

she and Mike could do together. The images in her mind were about to push her over the edge.

“Do you want me to fuck you, El?” He was getting close. Hearing her say that she wanted him was almost enough to make him burst.

“Uh huh.” El was imagining him throwing her onto the bed and lying on top of her, their mouths melting together as they ripped at each other’s clothing until they were no longer wearing anything. Her fingers sped up. “Mike,” she could only whisper, “I’m, oh, you’re gonna make me come.”

Mike loved the sound of that. “Me too, El. But don’t hold back. I want to hear you while I watch you.” He was starting to leak but wanted to hold out until she was ready.

El looked him in the eyes as she pushed her fingers all the way inside her. “Mike! Oh, fuck, I like watching you do that. You look so hot. I’m, shit! I’m coming, Mike...” She let her head roll back as she felt herself let go.

Mike could see her body convulse slightly. Upon hearing her declare that she was coming he had given in to his own climax. “El, I’m coming too! Fuuuuck!” His eyes were closed and his hand kept pumping. El opened her eyes in time to see him come all over his chest. She thought it would never end, there was so much.

They stared at each other for a few minutes, both wanting to remember how the other looked after such an occasion.

“Hours now.” El said. She sounded sleepy but was smiling.

“Hours. Do you have like a checklist or something of everything you’re bringing?”

“I do. I can’t pack until the night before but I have the costumes and I know what clothes I’m bringing. Is there anything else I’ll need?”

“Just you I think. That’s all I need you to bring.” Mike winked at her.

“You’re sweet. But seriously, if you think of anything else I’ll need let me know.” She yawned.

“I know you’re tired. You don’t have to call me if you don’t want to. I can fall asleep by myself.” Mike said.

“Maybe you can but I might not be able to. I’m calling you in ten minutes. Go get ready for bed.”

“I’m already in bed.” Mike joked.

“You know what I mean. Let me brush my teeth and then I’ll call you back on my phone, okay?”

“You know I love falling asleep talking to you, El.”

They got ready for sleep and began their usual bedtime routine of talking about silly things until one of them really started to sound sleepy. Then the other would talk soothingly to the sleepy one until they fell asleep. It was usually Mike who got sleepy first but tonight it was El. She listened as Mike’s voice gently rocked her to sleep. When he was certain that she was out he whispered, “just a few more hours. I think I love you, El.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Thanks so much for the positivity on my previous chapter. The next chapter will be the start of the convention, so heads up, there will definitely be some very adult situations. Celebration, indeed.

6. Chapter 6

Notes for the Chapter:

I'd like to give a shoutout to my girl FangirlingStrangerThings for letting me complain and always being so very super positive and giving great ideas. I'm happy to know you!

The Maine fog was dense on the morning of June 6th. El stood on the decking outside her apartment door, her two suitcases beside her, waiting for Max who was scrambling because she had overslept. El looked out over the field adjacent to their apartment and watched as the fog moved with the wind.

It's like the Dagobah System. The Force will be strong with this trip. She smiled.

Max finally appeared at the door with her keys in hand and the two girls set off for Bangor International Airport. It was a short ride as the girls lived in Orono near the University of Maine campus which was not far at all from Bangor. El had one regular suitcase and a smaller carry on, having put the costumes in the carry on bag just in case her luggage should get lost. She and Max said their goodbyes and El made her way to the check-in counter.

The flight from Bangor to New York was on a plane with propellers and it made El uneasy to feel the bumps and jumps of the small aircraft flying through the fog. She kept her thoughts on the fact that she would see Mike by the end of the day and it made her feel more at peace. There was some turbulence but El just breathed in and out, closing her eyes and pretending she was in a galaxy far, far away.

Her layover in New York was almost five and a half hours. She knew Mike would be driving but she wanted him to know she'd made it to New York at least. She sent him a text.

I'm in New York and will be for a little while. Need any souvenirs?

She was surprised when he wrote back, thinking that he'd be on the road.

I just need you. I can't check into the hotel until after 2:00 and I'm only thirty minutes away so I haven't left yet.

El was sitting in the terminal her plane would eventually depart from. When she saw that Mike was still at home she thought it would be easier to call him than to keep texting him.

"You just need me, huh?" El said after Mike answered his phone.

"Yes, that's all I need. Are you bored already?" Mike asked. It sounded like drawers were opening and then shutting.

"I am. I guess I could explore the airport. It's big, but I don't want to waste money on airport things. I want to save it for the con. What are you doing?"

"I'm packing, of course. I want to check in as soon as I can so I can get our tickets and then come wait for you. I don't care if I have to wait two hours." She could tell he was smiling.

El sighed. "I'll be there as soon as I can. I wish I had powers so I could get there quicker."

"Maybe that's not the type of power you have." Mike's voice was low.

"Mike." El said softly. He knew he had made her blush.

"Think about what kind of food you might want for dinner and I'll take you wherever you want to go tonight. Do you have anything to read while you wait to leave? Because if you want to buy a book at the airport do it and I'll reimburse you so you don't have to worry about being out any money."

Mike was so sweet. Every time she thought he couldn't possibly be any sweeter he topped himself.

"I do have a book. It seems interesting but I haven't started it yet. It's called *NOS4A2* and it's by Joe Hill. He's Stephen King's son," El explained.

"Are you *trying* to give me an aneurysm? That book is *amazing*, El! I read it last year and I loved it. I love Stephen King and I've read all of Joe Hill's books. I knew he was Steve's son when I saw his picture even though he was trying not to ride his dad's coattails. He just looks too much like his dad. *That's* the book you brought? Can you get any more awesome?"

El giggled, "I guess we never talked about our favorite authors. I do live in Maine though and went to school and work at the University of Maine, where Stephen King went as well. A group of us went trick-or-treating at his house one year but he wasn't home. His house is badass. It's on West Broadway in Bangor. I love him like a father, so I guess that would make Joe my brother?" She laughed. "I'm more excited to start this book now that you like it so much."

"It made me cry." Mike said. "I know you'll love it."

"I'm going to start it now then. I'll let you get packed and I'll see you in just a few hours. Please be safe driving over there, okay? Oh, and don't forget your Han boots!"

"I will, and I won't." He chuckled. "Hey, El?" Mike sounded like he had something else he wanted to say.

"Yes?"

"Um, nothing. I'll see you in a little while. I can't wait."

"Neither can I. Bye, Mike."

El looked at her phone. She still had a few hours to wait. She made herself as comfortable as she could and started her book, quickly becoming engrossed in the story.

She almost missed the call for boarding because she was so into her book but something clicked in her head as the loudspeaker called the

number for her flight so she quickly grabbed her bag and got in line to board the plane. She had a window seat this time, seat 11F. She didn't know how she had gotten the upgrade to comfort class but she wasn't going to question it. Being closer to the front meant she could deboard earlier and see Mike sooner. The takeoff was smooth, unlike the propeller plane she'd been on earlier in the day, and she watched the clouds until she felt sleepy and closed her eyes.

Falling asleep made the flight seem to go faster and before she knew it the flight attendant was gently asking her to put her seat back into the upright position to get ready to land. El could feel the excitement building inside her. She felt nervous and happy and even scared all at once.

She thought the plane would never get finished taxiing to the terminal. Once they landed El was so jittery that she kept repeating Max's words in her head. *Don't pick at your cuticles or your fingers will bleed.* Instead she balled her hands into fists and tried to keep calm. Finally the plane stopped and they were ready to deboard. She retrieved her carry on from the overhead compartment and tried to be patient as the people in front of her milled about, seeming to be in no hurry at all to get off the plane. Once they started moving though it went rather quickly.

El checked the signs to see which way baggage claim was and headed in that direction. There were a lot of people standing around waiting for their friends or loved ones or colleagues or whomever they were at the airport to pick up. El looked around. There were several different conveyors. She knew which one her suitcase should be on when they unloaded the plane but she wasn't sure if Mike would be able to figure it out. She had walked around the entire conveyor belt but the luggage from her plane wasn't yet coming out. She turned to the right and then she saw him.

He was looking around at the people, scanning the small crowd for El. Somehow when she had turned around that's when he saw her and they looked at each other from where they stood for a few seconds before El sprinted to him and he caught her in midair as she jumped into his arms.

He held her tightly and she buried her face in his neck, intoxicated by the smell of his skin mixed with his cologne. After a minute he set her down gently but they didn't really part. They looked at each other, not speaking, their eyes saying everything for them. People were walking around them but they didn't even see them.

"Hi," El whispered.

"You're here." Mike whispered back as he started bending his head toward her. She had just enough time to gasp before his lips met hers in a kiss that she could swear had been in all her recent dreams. It felt soft and familiar, but exciting and sexy as well. Her hands were in his hair, trying to pull herself closer to him. Somewhere a buzzer sounded signaling that a new set of luggage was coming down the conveyor but they weren't bothered to stop. El's bag had actually gone around the belt five or six times before they finally remembered that they were in the middle of an airport and had the entire rest of the week to be together. Mike had moved his hand to her face and she felt him softly caress her cheek as they brought their kiss to a close.

"I'm so happy to see you. You have no idea." Mike said softly, their heads still touching.

"I think I do." She smiled up at him and he thought he might just die right there.

"Are you hungry? Do you wanna get out of here?" Mike asked.

"Yes. Let's get my bag." She took his hand and they walked to the conveyor, which now only had four bags riding around and around waiting to be claimed.

Mike didn't even have to ask which one was El's. He knew it was the one with the Rebel Alliance sticker on it. He smiled widely at her as he lifted it from its spot on the belt.

"Nerd." He said lowly, winking at her. She smiled and shrugged.

Mike was driving them to a little Greek restaurant and as they drove he kept looking over at his passenger, still not believing she was next to him. He had waited for so long and when he kissed her it felt like the first drop of a big roller coaster, like the feeling of warm ocean waves crashing into him, like sitting by the fireside after being outside in the cold. It was all the best feelings at once. He reached across the seat and took her hand in his. Seeing her smile at him in person was better than he could have ever hoped.

They couldn't stop looking at each other as they ate their food. Mike kept getting lost in her eyes and forgetting what he'd been saying, which was probably nonsense anyway because all he could really think about was that she was *here* and he couldn't wait to go back to the hotel. El didn't notice the nonsense because she was thinking the same thing.

When they got to the hotel after eating dinner Mike carried both of El's bags for her. She swiped the keycard at the door of their room since his hands were full and held the door open for him as he entered with her luggage. El looked around the room as Mike set her bags near the closet area. There were two beds and it looked like Mike had taken the one closest to the window.

"You can have whichever bed you want." Mike said. El turned to look at him and when their eyes met all talk of choosing beds was over. She walked to him, throwing her arms around his neck and pulling him down to her, kissing him fervently. Mike pushed her down onto the nearest bed and they laughed together as they both realized they were trying to kick their shoes off at the same time.

"Hold up." Mike sat up and untied El's black Chuck Taylors before slipping her feet out of them. He pushed his own shoes off with his feet, using one foot to push the heel down until he could shake his foot out of it. Then he was kissing her again.

"I wanted this so much." El was saying between kisses, pawing at Mike's shirt, trying to remove it from his torso. He peeled it off in one motion. El kissed his chest and sat back just a bit. "Now me," she said as she moved his hands to the hemline of her vintage Star Wars t-shirt. Mike watched the image of Yoda turn inside out as he

slipped the shirt over her head. He stopped and stared at her.

“What is it?” She asked, starting to feel self-conscious. He immediately reached out for her and pulled her into him, feeling her skin make contact with his.

“I just wanted to look at you. You are so perfect.” His hands moved up her back, stopping at the clasp of her bra. “Can I?”

She nodded. In seconds the bra was off and tossed aside, leaving them both with only their lower halves still clothed. They couldn’t stop kissing.

“I have a surprise for you but you can’t have it today.” El said as Mike moved to her neck. His lips and tongue on her warm skin sent shockwaves down her spine and she kissed his forehead and temples as he worked his way down from her neck to her chest.

“You can’t tell me things like that and then make me wait,” he whined, continuing kissing toward her breasts.

She was mid-sentence when she felt his mouth on her left breast, his tongue grazing her nipple. “It’s worth the...oh, shit that feels good, Mike...wait. I promise,” she said as she held his head against her. She felt him slide his hand up her side from her hip to her right breast and gently squeeze as he sucked on her left one. She suddenly felt like her jeans were too tight, too restricting.

“Help me take these off,” she murmured as she unbuttoned her pants. Mike’s hands went to the waistband of her jeans and tugged them down. He watched as they lowered, leaving El in just her panties. He quickly followed suit and felt El’s hands guiding his own jeans lower, feeling himself brush against her stomach as she pushed them down from such close proximity.

El looked at him. “I love you in these boxers. I like the tight ones. You look so good in them.” She said, her hand was almost touching him.

And I love you, Mike thought. He kissed her again as they stood on

their knees on the bed. Mike's hands moved around her and she could feel his big palms on her back, moving lower by the second. She was doing the same to him, only with much smaller hands.

El felt his fingers graze the top of her panties in the back. He was rubbing circles on her skin and with each pass was getting closer to her ass. Finally she felt his hands on her and she moaned softly.

"Do you like that?" Mike asked as he squeezed and then pulled her more into him, his hands cupping both of her ass cheeks.

"Yes," she gasped. She could feel him for sure now. He had her pressed against him as closely as he could.

El slipped her hands beneath the elastic waistband of his boxers and did the same to him. "See? It feels really good." She whispered before kissing him again.

"El, I want you so bad." Mike had pulled her down on top of him and they were lying on the bed. Her legs were on either side of him, straddling his midsection.

"Do you? Will you show me how bad?"

Mike accepted her challenge. She sounded so sexy when she'd asked. He rolled them over so that he was on top. His fingers trailed down her body slowly, making her squirm, until he arrived at her panties. He ran his hand over her, not taking them off like she'd hoped he would. He stayed on the outside of the fabric, rubbing small circles over her center. He could tell almost immediately that she was more than ready but they had all night and he wanted to make it memorable.

"I think you may have a problem here." He looked up, trying to look concerned.

"What?" El was almost panting.

"These panties seem to be wet. Maybe you should have them removed," Mike said, though he didn't stop rubbing her there.

“Then take them off. *Please* take them off, Mike.”

“Should I? Then you won’t have anything on.” He was getting a kick out of teasing her. “Do you want me to see you naked?”

El was enjoying his little game but was also starting to become very frustrated. She needed to feel so much more.

“That’s what I want. Please give me what I want.”

Mike let his fingers dip beneath the waistband of her panties and started to slowly pull them down. El felt them finally leave her ankles and she sighed in relief.

“There you go. Is that better?” Mike asked.

“Yes, but I still need to feel more, Mike.” She was looking at him with desperation. Mike knew he needed to give her some relief.

He moved his fingers over her again and felt her for the first time. El groaned when he touched her slick opening. It made her feel electric. She was about to lose her mind.

“Mike, please just take off your shorts. I need you so much. I just need to feel you inside. Please?”

Hearing her beg him like that, Mike quickly did as she asked. He could tease her later. He didn’t want her to feel desperate and he also was needing her. He needed to feel connected in another way. He moved over her and kissed her deeply, feeling her arms wrap around him. Their tongues were yin and yang, Lennon and McCartney, Odysseus and Penelope. They were meant to go together.

“Do you want to be on top?” Mike asked. He liked the idea of looking up at her.

“Oh, yes, definitely.” El smiled as Mike rolled them over again.

Mike watched as El lined herself up over him. She felt like it was her

turn to tease *him*. She could feel him but she wouldn't allow herself to go down far enough for him to slide in. She bent forward and kissed him. She could feel his hands move to her hips to try to push her down but she kept herself slightly above him, grinning as he grumbled.

"Do you need something?" She asked seductively, moving to kiss his neck.

"I need to feel you, El. Please?"

El thought he sounded so sweet when he begged so she gave him just a little of what he wanted. She pushed herself back until she could feel him, letting his cock rest in between her folds which were wet with her arousal.

"Shit, I need more." Mike pleaded.

El moved herself back and forth, causing his erection to become saturated. Mike moaned.

"Oh, god. That's good."

"Is it good enough?" El asked, a sly grin on her face. Mike looked at her.

"No. Am I going to have to take what I need?" His pupils were completely blown and his eyes were dark with lust. El felt new desire overwhelm her when Mike's hands on her hips softened and then gripped her again.

El looked down at him. She only wanted one thing now. "Do it, Mike," she whispered. She felt Mike's hands push her back and down and felt him slide in all at once, filling her and taking her breath away for a second.

"Are you okay?" Mike asked as he held himself in place so she could acclimate to the intrusion.

El nodded. "Yes, just give me a second." Mike watched as her facial

expression changed from a furrowed brow to relaxation. Then she smiled down at him.

“Okay. I just had to get used to the size.” She winked at him and started moving herself slowly on him, rocking back and forth.

“Jesus fuck, El. You are so *tight*! Oh, god, you feel so *good*!” His hands were on her hips again and he would pull her down as he pushed himself up, causing her eyes to roll almost into the back of her head.

“Mike, that’s...you’re so good at that.” She was definitely panting.

Mike moved his hands to her breasts and squeezed them both gently as she continued to ride him. He watched as she looked down to where they were connected, biting her lower lip as she did.

“You are so hot, El. Watching you right now is the best thing I’ve ever seen.”

“Mike, oh, fuck this feels good. I wanted this for so long.” She bent down to kiss him, never stopping her rocking motion. He pulled her to him and thrust himself deeper into her. Her head moved to his ear. “Oh, Mike, I think you’re going to make me come. Don’t stop. Please do it harder.”

Hearing her beg him to do it harder was enough to send him off the cliff but he was determined to let her finish first. If he had his way they might skip the convention altogether and just do this for the next five days but he knew that wasn’t practical. He held her close and pounded into her from below. She started moaning even heavier.

“Are you gonna come for me, El? I know you want to. I know you’ve wanted to for so long. I do too. It feels so good to be inside you right now. You feel so good on my cock.”

El cut him off. “Fuck, Mike! Oh, bury yourself in me and stay there. I’m coming on you right now...oh! Oh!”

Mike could feel her spasm around him. He had done as she asked and pushed himself in as far as he could go and now he was coming too. He held her close, still feeling her body convulse, and emptied into her. He instantly felt guilty for not pulling out but he wanted to bask in the moment before he brought that up.

They held each other until they started to feel a chill when the air conditioning kicked back on. They climbed under the covers. Mike pulled El close to him and held her, her head resting just under his chin.

“El, um, I... Jeez, I just came inside you. Is that going to be a problem?”

El laughed. “Not unless you have some disease you haven’t mentioned.” She sat up, feigning concern. “You *don’t* have a disease, do you?”

“No, I promise!”

“It’s okay, Mike. I’m twenty-five. I’ve been on the pill since I was twenty-one. You’re good. And at this point I don’t think I’d even care if you *did* have something. Just sayin’.” She kissed his cheek. Mike was instantly relieved.

They rested together for a while and then Mike remembered why they were even there in the first place.

“Oh! I got our lanyards and badges. They look badass! Look at all the stuff that comes with our tickets!” Mike was beaming.

El got out of bed and found Mike’s t-shirt. She threw it on while he unpacked all the swag from their VIP packages. He had put his boxers back on.

“We get these cool lanyards to hold our badges, this awesome patch, this sweet pin, these posters and we can get in early and have other perks too. This is going to be so fun! We can scout it all out tomorrow and see what all is down there. I figure we can come back up and put our costumes on once we’ve looked around to see if

there's anything we need to buy right then in case it sells out. I don't want to have to carry bags while we're Han and Leia." Mike was like an excited kid telling someone about his favorite toys. El felt her heart swell.

"Yes, about these tickets. Don't think I don't know what you spent on me, Mike. You really shouldn't have done that." El said. She was trying to sound stern but she was still feeling the afterglow and didn't sound angry at all. Not that she was angry, she just didn't think he should have spent that much money on her.

"You found out? Oh well. I don't care. I *wanted* to, El. I knew I wanted you to get to come to this and I wanted to spend the entire time with you. I knew that a long time ago."

El was standing next to Mike at the foot of the other bed where he had laid out all of the stuff from their packages. She pulled him to her and kissed him sweetly. "Thank you, Mike. You shouldn't have but I'm glad you did."

Mike smiled at her. "So we'll just need to wear these tomorrow when we go down. We can get in thirty minutes early so that will give us time to see what we might want to maybe buy. Who all would you like to meet this week?" He asked.

El thought about it. "I really just want the experience. I do want to meet Mark Hamill though. Everything costs so much."

"Yeah, it will be fun to just be a part of it. Maybe people will want to take pictures with us in costume. That could be cool." Mike suggested.

"I'm just glad to be here. And I'm glad to be here with *you*." El said. She stretched and yawned, the day of flying and waiting catching up to her.

"Are you tired?" Mike asked.

El looked at all of the stuff lying on the bed. "Yeah. I hate to make you move all of this."

Mike had no intention of moving the things off the bed. “Go get ready for bed. I’ll fix the stuff in here.”

He watched as El unzipped her suitcase to locate her toothbrush. He smiled as his shirt she was wearing rode up when she bent down. She found her toiletries bag and headed into the bathroom. Mike didn’t move anything from the bed but he did turn back the covers on the other bed, fluffing the pillows and turning out all the lights except for the lamp right next to the bed. A couple of minutes later El returned.

“You wanna just sleep here with me?” He asked.

El smiled and tried not to laugh. She replied in the sexiest tone she could muster for being so tired. “Why you stuck-up, half-witted, scruffy-looking nerfherder...” With every word she had inched closer to him until she crawled in beside him. He pulled her close to him and tickled her, causing her to shriek with laughter. Then he held her close.

“El, I’m happy you’re here.”

“Me too.”

They kissed again but then fell asleep. There would be time for other things. Just being together finally was enough to make them sleep peacefully. They were both excited to start the convention in the morning but even more excited to be together. It was everything they had dreamed. As a certain Emperor Palpatine might say, *it was their destiny*, but even evil rulers are right some of the time.

Notes for the Chapter:

So they haven’t exactly made it to the convention yet but they’re in the hotel and the con starts in the morning. I do wonder what surprise El has for Mike. I wonder what that could be... I guess he’ll find out some time while they’re there. Hope you enjoyed this chapter.

I can't say enough good things about Joe Hill so check him out if you haven't. NOS4A2 is the shit!

7. Chapter 7

Mike awoke first, blinking his eyes and remembering that he was in the hotel. On his left was El, still fast asleep. She was lying on her stomach with her head turned towards him. He watched her eyelids flutter, probably from whatever dream she was having.

I can't believe she's lying next to me, Mike thought. He brushed her hair back from her face, causing her to stir. He looked at the clock on the bedside table. It was 8:30 and they could get into the convention thirty minutes early so they needed to get up soon if they were going to have time to shower and get dressed.

"El? We need to get up." Mike kissed her forehead and then nuzzled her with his nose until she woke up.

"Mike?" She had forgotten where she was but quickly remembered the night before. She smiled sleepily at him, her eyelids still heavy. He leaned in and kissed her for real.

"Good morning. We need to get going so we can see what all is down there before the masses take over. Do you want to take the first shower?" Mike asked.

"Do you want to take one with me?"

Temptress!

Mike groaned. "I would love that but we will definitely not make it down there by 9:30 if I shower with you. We can do that later though?" Mike kicked himself for not waking up at 6:00 a.m.

El smiled. "You're right. I'll take mine and then you can have the bathroom." She got out of bed and Mike noticed that she didn't even take clothes with her into the bathroom. He guessed that she would just get dressed in the room once she was finished.

I'm definitely in love with her.

When she emerged from the bathroom Mike thought it best that he go ahead and get in the shower himself, and he thought that maybe it should be a *cold* shower because when El stepped out of the bathroom she was holding a towel and drying her hair but otherwise she was still all wet and wearing nothing and the image had burned itself into his brain. She was so stunning that he had to distract himself so they could stay on their schedule.

“Um, I’m just gonna go take my shower.” He stammered, not able to tear his gaze away from her. El smirked as he passed by her on his way into the bathroom. Mike felt her fingertips graze his back as he walked past her. He turned the faucet to cold and stood under the spray until he calmed down.

El was dressed by the time Mike finished his shower. She was wearing faded cutoffs that were pretty short and an old ringer style *Return of the Jedi* shirt with Luke and Vader on it. Her socks were white tube socks with stripes and she was sitting on the bed putting on her shoes. She looked like she was straight out of 1983. She looked at him as he stood watching her tie her shoes. He was wearing only a towel.

“I’m just going to brush my teeth and put on a little makeup while you get dressed.” She said, standing up and walking toward the bathroom.

“Okay but you totally don’t need it.” Mike replied. She smiled and winked at him as she disappeared around the corner into the bathroom.

Mike dried off and threw on his own clothes, some black jeans and navy blue *The Empire Strikes Back* shirt with the poster image on it. He had already brushed his teeth and was just going to let his hair dry on its own, choosing to just run his fingers through his messy locks so they weren’t sticking out as much.

He was holding both of their badge lanyards when El finished in the bathroom. He draped hers around her neck and put his on as well.

“Ready to do this?” He asked excitedly.

“So ready.” She was just as excited as Mike.

They made sure they both had room keys, their money, and their phones for taking pictures and in case they got separated. Mike let El press the elevator buttons on their way to the convention center in the bottom of the hotel. Once they were in the elevator she grabbed his hand and squeezed, grinning brightly at him. He could sense her anticipation.

“I’m so glad you’re here with me, El.” Mike said as he pulled her near enough to him that their foreheads could touch.

“This is going to be so great!” She stood on her tip toes and pressed a kiss to his lips. Just then, they felt the heave of the car stopping. The doors opened and they stepped off, already able to see into the convention halls from the open doorways. Flashing their badges at the security guards stationed outside of the door, they entered the con. El was awestruck, her mouth gaping open as she looked around.

There were sets that would be used for pictures, booths selling everything Star Wars that could be imagined and some that couldn’t be imagined, huge models of ships. And that was only what they could see from stepping through the doorway. Mike took El’s hand and they started walking around to see everything.

At the back corner there was a carbonite freezing chamber that looked exactly like the one in *The Empire Strikes Back* from the scene when Han gets frozen. El was instantly excited.

“Do you think they’ll let us take pictures here in our costumes?” She asked, almost jumping up and down.

“I think that’s exactly what it’s for. I think that’s what *all* of these different sets are for. There will be plenty of people in costume. You won’t believe how awesome some of them are, El. We could find a Vader and a Boba Fett to complete our scene. I know we could.”

El hugged him.

As people started filing into the convention hall it got crowded quickly but El and Mike didn't care. Mike was loving watching El gasp every time she saw someone in a great costume. He took her picture with a couple of stormtroopers, a Kylo Ren in his mask, a pic of her on her knees hugging an Ewok, and sitting in a mockup cockpit of an X-wing complete with Red Leader helmet. She took the same picture of Mike. His face when he climbed into the cockpit made her heart melt. He looked so happy.

A couple of hours into being there El spotted the most perfect Chewbacca she'd ever seen and ran up to him to see if she could take a picture. As Mike got ready to snap it, Chewie picked her up and held her in the air. Her face was priceless to Mike.

They had another con goer take a picture of the both of them with Darth Vader.

"I'm hungry." El said after their third trip around the place. They had seen lots of places they wanted to take pictures when they were in their costumes later.

"So am I. Do you want to go eat at the restaurant here in the hotel or get some room service?"

It was almost 1:00. The con would be open until 7:00.

"I think I may need a nap too. I'm still tired from flying yesterday. Is that okay? You can come back down here if you want."

"We'll see. Let's go back up and order some food. My treat." Mike took her hand again. El loved the way his fingers laced between hers.

Back in the room, Mike looked over the room service menu while El hung their costumes up to loosen any wrinkles. The fabric she'd used for hers would easily shake out any wrinkles and since she had folded Mike's costume so well and he was supposed to be a rugged scoundrel anyway it didn't take much to get the costumes looking screen accurate.

“What do you want to eat?” Mike asked, moving to sit next to her on the bed. She had already taken off her shoes and was lying down. He handed her the menu.

“A burger is fine. I’m just tired. I hope it doesn’t take too long.” She yawned.

Mike ordered two burgers with fries for them and sat beside El, looking at the special convention program the VIPs were given. When he looked over at her a few minutes later she was asleep. He gently slid off his side of the bed and went around to her side. The bed was still unmade from the morning so he moved her legs until he could get the covers from underneath them and then he tucked her in. He would wake her when their food arrived.

Almost forty-five minutes later the food did arrive and Mike let the room service waiter push the cart into the room. Mike made sure everything was right before he woke El.

“Hey, our food is here. Do you want to eat?” He asked, waking her by running his fingers through her hair.

She nodded and got up. They ate their burgers and talked about what they would do that afternoon. They still wanted to debut the costumes that El had worked so hard on.

“Do you think I could sleep until maybe 3:30 and then go back down? If you want to go you can. I don’t want to keep you from doing anything.” El had finished her burger and was heading back into the bed.

“That will be fine, El. We still have four more days to be here. We don’t have to spend every minute down there.” Mike smiled.

“I don’t want you to be bored because I’m all sleepy and no fun.” She said.

Mike finished his own burger and took off his shoes. He looked at his phone before setting his alarm and then crawled into bed beside El.

“Is it okay if I just take a nap with you? I’d rather do that.” He whispered. She already had her eyes closed.

Upon hearing him she opened her eyes. He was on his side under the covers, his head lining up perfectly with hers.

“I’d love that.” She smiled. *I love you. I want to tell you*, she thought.

Mike scooted closer and put his arm around her, pulling her into him so that she was flush against him. “Then let’s sleep. I set my alarm. We’ll still have time to go back down there in our costumes.” He murmured into her hair.

They slept until Mike’s alarm woke them. El felt a lot better. She knew it might take a few minutes to get her hair to look right for her costume so she set about working on that while Mike put on his costume.

“Jeez, El, this thing is so awesome! You got everything right!” Mike had the pants on and the shirt. He stuck his head into the bathroom to see how she was doing with her hair. He was a bit amazed at how quickly she had transformed her hair from El to Leia. She had removed her shirt so she wouldn’t have to slip it over her hair. “Wow, um, you look really pretty.”

“You’ll have to help me zip up my costume. I’ll be out in a minute.”

Oh yeah, how could I forget that?

“Are you sticking with your plan?” Mike asked her.

“Of not wearing anything underneath it? Oh yes. If that’s okay with you, Mike.”

“Just don’t make me mess up your hair before we even leave the room.” He chuckled nervously.

“I can’t make any promises on that.”

El finally stepped out of the bathroom. Mike watched as she undressed the rest of the way, his eyes never leaving her body. She stepped into the dress of her costume and crossed the room for him to zip it up. His fingers were shaking but he held it together and did what he needed to do.

As for El, when she walked into the room and saw Mike standing there in full Han Solo finery she had to pause. He had brought a leather holster and his replica blaster and it was strapped to his right leg. His boots looked perfect and he was standing with a definite cocksure swagger that caused her heart to race. He was watching her undress and it was making her feel excited but she knew she had to put on her costume so she busied herself with that, trying not to think about how she could feel his eyes on her. When he zipped her up her heart was pounding so hard in her chest she was sure he could hear it. Then he was finished and she put on the robe that went over her dress and slipped into the shoes she had brought for the finishing touch. They stood side by side and looked at themselves in the big full length mirror on the closet door.

“Damn, we look *good!*” Mike said.

“We really do. I’m so excited to do this.” El smiled brightly at him. “I know this isn’t what she’s wearing when Han gets frozen but I like *this* costume. Do you think anyone will be a stickler and call me out on it?”

“You look so good, El. If anyone says anything about where we take pictures then their lives are sad.”

Mike held their room keys in one of the pockets of his jacket and his phone fit in his back pocket, unseen unless he took it out. El didn’t have any pockets so all the pictures they took would have to be on Mike’s phone. They went back downstairs and were immediately surrounded by people asking to take pictures with them. El thought it was awesome, she felt like a celebrity. They made their way to the back of the hall to where the carbonite chamber was. To their surprise there was a film crew there shooting a documentary about the convention. One of the camera guys saw El and motioned to a producer to get his attention. The producer noticed and after a quick

discussion with the camera guy he approached El and Mike.

“These costumes are ridiculous. They look so screen accurate. Where did you find them?” He asked, his question posed more to Mike than to El.

Mike smiled. “She made them herself, both of them.” He put his arm around her as he praised her work. “They’re pretty great.”

The producer looked more closely at El upon hearing Mike say she had made the costumes herself. “You know something? You look a lot like Leia. I mean, this is a different costume than this scene had but you look so much like her that I don’t care. I want to show the imagination of the convention. Would you two want to be in the short film we’re making here? We’re trying to highlight some of the different aspects of the con and want to show off some of the set design. Would you want to do the *I love you* scene? It wouldn’t take long.” He looked back and forth between El and Mike.

El spoke. “Sure, we were hoping to just take some pictures of us here in these costumes. Could one of you record us doing it with his phone?” She pointed to Mike. “You don’t have to have it be the same angle as your movie, I just want the moment captured. If you don’t mind.”

The producer and the cameraman had another quick discussion, both nodding about something. Then the producer’s attention was back on Mike and El. “Okay, that won’t be a problem. And you can also leave your email addresses with my assistant and she’ll make sure you’re both sent a copy of what we shoot of you. Do you think you’re ready?” He asked them.

“What about Boba Fett and Darth Vader? And Chewbacca? Shouldn’t they be in the scene as well?” Mike asked as he took his phone out of his pocket to hand it to the man.

“Look right over there, son. Will they do?” Mike looked at where the man was pointing. Just to the left of the carbonite chamber stood Fett and Vader with Chewbacca standing behind them, C3P0 in pieces strapped to his back. Mike could have sworn he’d gone back

in time to 1980 and the filming of the movie.

“Um, yeah. They’re perfect.”

Mike took his jacket off.

“Now, we’re not shooting it frame by frame with closeups like the film. We’re trying to capture the magic that fans create for themselves at these conventions. Everyone else will just be scene decoration. We’ll start with Leia and Han standing beside Chewbacca. Han, you lean in and kiss her and then the stormtrooper here will pull you to the chamber which will lower you hydraulically. Leia, you say your line and then as you’re lowered, Han, you say yours. Are you ready?”

They both nodded. Mike was feeling excited but El was feeling nervous. It was just role playing but she was about to be telling the truth and she hadn’t expected to do it this way. The fog from the machine was floating all around, Vader was standing near the back of the chamber, Chewbacca was next to El and Mike. El saw the lady with Mike’s camera walk in front of them.

“Before you start, I have to take this picture. This is just too perfect. Just look at each other like you’re doing right now. You have the exact same look on your face as Leia does in the movie in this part. How’s that? Oh well, never mind. It’s going to make a great picture though.” She snapped a few, Mike was looking at El who looked scared.

“Are you okay?” He whispered.

She just nodded.

“Okay, ready? Places! Aaaand, action!”

Mike leaned in and kissed El until he felt the stormtrooper pull him backwards. He stood where the trooper left him and looked at El.

“I love you.” She called to him.

Does she have tears in her eyes?

He felt the platform start to lower. "I know." He kept his eyes on hers until the fog increased and surrounded him totally.

"Cut! Okay, that was brilliant! Are you two together because that was filled with so much emotion and there were only five words spoken. How powerful! My assistant filmed it on your phone and she took a few still pictures before we started. Give her your email addresses and she'll see to it that you get a copy of this footage. Wow. That was better than I'd expected. Thank you both!" He was smiling and clapped Mike on the back when he came up from the chamber. El was quiet.

"El, that was *perfect!*" You were so awesome. You looked just like her. I thought you were about to cry."

They were walking around, stopping occasionally when someone would ask to take a picture with them.

"Yeah." El could barely speak.

"What is it, El?" His hands were gentle on her wrists as he turned her to face him.

She wanted to tell him. But there were so many people around. She wasn't sure where she could go and be more alone with him but wasn't ready to call it a day and go back up to their room. They were standing in the middle of the aisle near a giant Lego Death Star. She looked up at him, he actually looked scared, like something might really be wrong.

"Mike," she whispered, "I...I wasn't acting back there. I wasn't pretending."

Mike didn't seem to understand what she was saying just yet.

"What? What do you mean?"

"I... I *do* love you." She made her admission and then looked away.

A tear rolled down her cheek.

Mike looked shocked but when he saw how afraid and vulnerable she looked he let his hands move to her face, his thumbs brushing away her tears. He leaned forward and kissed her.

“I love you too. Oh, god, I love you so much.” He whispered, her face still in his hands. She smiled, relieved.

They kissed again and then were interrupted by a Tusken Raider and a Jawa.

“That was so great! Did you plan that? I filmed the whole thing. I thought it was actors doing a scene. Now I can see that you’re crying. Can I please send you this video I just recorded? I’d want it if it was me and my boyfriend.” The Jawa was speaking. The Tusken Raider must be her boyfriend. Mike used her phone to email the video to himself and then he asked another passerby to take a picture of the four of them. He was feeling happier than he’d ever felt.

When they finally tired of taking pictures they headed back to their room. Everything felt different now, but in the best of ways. El had told Mike that she loved him and he said he loved her back. That was all she’d been wanting for months now. They couldn’t stop touching each other on the elevator ride back up to their floor. They got back to their room and once Mike had shut the door El was on him in a flash, kissing him.

“I love you. I really do, Mike. I think I’ve known for a while.”

“So have I. Known I love you, I mean. I think I knew that first day. It was like, something fell into place. Like a misaligned cog that suddenly righted itself.”

“Will you help me take off this dress?”

“Sure. Want me to take off my costume first?” Mike asked, starting to remove his jacket. El stopped him.

“Leave it on.”

Notes for the Chapter:

So, I guess we know where the next chapter will start (heh, heh). But they love each other! Huzzah! Maybe they'll meet somebody famous soon as well. Thanks for reading and for any reviews. Much love!

8. Chapter 8

El turned around so Mike could get to the zipper of her dress. She felt his hands on her back as he slipped the zipper down slowly, then the dress fell to the floor, leaving her naked. He pulled her into him from behind and wrapped his arms around her. She turned around to face him. His hands were roaming up and down her back and sides, causing fresh tingles to course through her. He bent forward to kiss her and she could feel his rough jacket against her chest. Her arms had gone around his neck and before she knew it he had lifted her up, holding her bridal style, and was carrying her to the bed, still kissing her. He gently set her down and was on top of her.

“Ow.” She said as his holster dug into her hip.

“Yeah. El, this is sexy as fuck but I’m going to take this costume off. I don’t want to mess it up so we can wear them again, okay?”

El didn’t care about hot costumes anymore, she just wanted *Mike*. “Yeah, okay.” She nodded and watched as Mike removed his jacket and holster and set them on the other bed behind them. He pulled his boots off one by one as quickly as he could. Before he took off his shirt and pants he picked her dress up from the floor where it had fallen earlier and laid it out on the other bed as well. She watched him unbutton the shirt and once it was off she pulled him to her with her legs.

“I can help you with the pants.” She said, feeling his warm chest against hers as she pulled him down closer to her, having pulled the button free as she pulled him down to her. They were kissing again almost as soon as Mike was close enough to reach her. She could feel his hands in her hair, his fingers on her scalp. She was pushing the waist of his pants down as much as she could. She felt him smile against her mouth while they were kissing.

“Here, let me help.” He stood up long enough to let the pants fall to the floor. El was surprised at what she saw.

“You didn’t wear any underwear either?” She was smiling.

“I wanted to be like you.” His lopsided grin looked down at her on the bed.

“You’re a dork. But you’re a sexy dork and you’re *my* dork.” She pulled him back down.

“That’s right. I’m *your* dork.” He was serious again as he looked into her eyes. “I love you.”

Her hands went into his hair and she wrapped her legs around him. They were sideways on the bed since that’s where Mike had set her down when he had carried her over to it. As he kissed her this time it felt different, not hurried, not hesitant. It was sensual and El could feel his love through the kiss. He tilted his head to deepen it and El felt goosebumps break out on her skin, though she wasn’t cold. She could feel him between her legs but he wasn’t trying to ram into her or hurry up to get to the good part. He was just kissing her and letting her kiss him back, like if that was all they did he would be fine with it because it was *her*. But El wouldn’t let it stop there. She wanted him. It was nice to just be in the moment with him though, to feel their tongues brushing together, to smell his skin so close to her, to hear the small gasps and moans that would escape from both of them when they had to breathe, to feel his weight on top of her. It felt safe and warm and, well, quite frankly, like *home*.

But El could only take feeling him against her leg for so long before she wanted more. She pulled her legs back a bit and broke their kiss.

“Mike. Make love to me. Oh, fucking shit, that sounded so stupid when I said it out loud.” They both laughed.

“You don’t have to say it anymore then. That’s always what I’ll be doing.” His face was serious again. “It’s what I did last night but you didn’t know yet.” He was running the fingers of his right hand through her hair gently, his face just inches from hers.

“I love you.” She whispered, her eyes never leaving his. “Can I have you now?”

Mike didn't answer with words, only leaned forward and kissed her again. His lips were warm and soft but the kiss was firm and full of desire. She felt him start to push himself in and instinctively scooted toward the edge of the bed. He was standing at the side. He pulled her more forward to him, tilting her hips and holding on to her there as he filled her.

"Is that good?" He asked. El couldn't speak. The angle was so perfect that she was afraid if she spoke she would come unhinged immediately. She nodded and Mike could see that she was holding back.

"El, it's okay. You don't have to wait. If this feels good please let me know." He had started to slowly move out and then back in, pushing harder on the inward thrust.

"Mike, I'm sorry, I'm already coming...her eyes rolled back a bit before she closed them. Mike could feel her walls spasming but he kept his rhythm.

"Shh, don't say you're sorry. Just stay here with me. Let's see if you can do it again." Mike leaned forward over her so he could kiss her, never stopping his motions.

When El recovered fully from her orgasm she felt a sudden burst of energy and pushed Mike off of her, only to pull him back onto the bed nearer to the headboard.

"Sit up," she instructed. He did as she commanded.

She climbed on his lap and let her legs wrap around him, feeling her calves on his back. She lined herself back up with his cock and slowly slid down, taking him all the way in. Her arms were around his neck and she was kissing him.

Mike held her tightly, using his arms to help move her up and down on his shaft. He didn't think he would last long from this position. Feeling himself so deep and feeling her so close to him was going to do it for him, for sure. He moved his right hand down to massage her, his last two fingers so close that he could feel his cock slipping in

and out of her.

“Mike, don’t stop that. That’s good. Oh, that’s really good.”

Mike loved it when she told him how she was feeling and what to do to make it better. He kept his pace and focused on making her climax again. She pulled back from him to look down at his hand. Mike looked at her and for the first time noticed that there was a mirror over the desk in the room and from where he was sitting he had the perfect view of them sitting on the bed. He could see El bouncing up and down and the sight was so hot that he had to look away.

She had her hand on his hand now, the one that was rubbing her. “Do that. Oh, shit, Mike. I’m gonna come so hard. Don’t stop.”

Mike gritted his teeth, he was so close. He had to hold out, but somehow he found the strength to speak.

“El, I love it when you come. I love it when you come on *me*.”

That did it for her.

She threw her head back and Mike let himself look in the mirror again, watching her writhe on him while he felt the spasms himself. He looked back and forth from the mirror to her sitting on him and in no time he felt himself chasing her.

“El, oh, fuck, El! Aaaahh...” Mike held her down on him and let go. El watched his face as he experienced it. She loved to see him feeling so happy. She let him catch his breath and then leaned against him, feeling his arms wrap around her. They held each other until they were both breathing normally once again. El pulled back enough to look him in the eyes. She smiled, the kind of smile that always made his heart race.

“You are amazing. I love you so much.” She said.

“I know.” He winked at her.

After they had thrown some clothes back on, just pajamas since they both knew they were in for the night, they ordered pizza. Mike would go grab it from the lobby when it was delivered. It should take about thirty minutes. While they waited they looked at Mike's phone to see the pictures that had been taken that day.

They laughed at El being held in the air by Chewie, her face looking shocked but happy at the same time. There were some of them in costume with regular convention goers who just wanted a picture with Han and Leia, some of El with Kylo Ren and an Ewok, Mike standing next to various props, a big grin on his face.

When they got to the pictures the film crew assistant had taken they were both speechless. It looked almost exactly like the scene from the movie. El standing on the left with Chewbacca next to her, Mike was on the right of the picture and they were both looking longingly at each other. They could see the fog and Vader in the background. It looked so *real*.

"Look at your face. I'm sorry, I should have known, El. I can see in this picture how you felt. I thought at the time you were just being a really good actor."

"It's okay, Mike. You know now."

"These pictures are amazing. I'm so glad we have them." Mike said as he swiped to the next one.

When he got to the video the assistant had taken they were both pleased at how real it looked, how their eyes never wavered from each other and how confidently they had said their lines, both knowing now it was because they both meant them.

They scrolled through the rest that had been taken. It was only the first day of the convention and they already had so many great memories.

"Ooh! I forgot about the video I emailed to myself from the Jawa! Hang on and I'll get it moved over." Mike fiddled with his phone for a minute and then they were watching the screen together. The

scene opened with Mike and El standing very near to each other in the middle of an aisle near a giant Lego Death Star. Somehow they could hear the audio, though El could have sworn that she was whispering when she was talking to him.

Mike, I...I wasn't acting back there. I wasn't pretending.

They watched. Mike's hands were on her wrists and he was pulling her closer to him without even realizing it.

What? What do you mean?

They saw El look back at him and then down, and then back at him again.

I... I do love you.

El looked away and seemed to be crying. Mike's face looked surprised but then sad as he seemed to realize that she was crying. They watched as his hands moved to her face, tilting it up to him, and his thumbs brushed the tears from her cheeks. Their faces were so close together.

I love you too. Oh, god, I love you so much.

Then Mike and El watched their first ever kiss when they both knew how the other felt. It was pretty awesome to think that had been captured on video. El was certainly happy to have it.

The video showed El smiling back up at Mike after he told her he loved her and then they kissed again, and then it cut off. Mike was thankful to that Jawa.

"I can't believe we have this to watch. How lucky are we?" Mike asked, more to himself.

"We're very lucky. I feel lucky to have you." She was looking at him with such love in her eyes that Mike felt like his chest might burst. Just then his phone buzzed signaling that the pizza was in the lobby. Mike jogged down to retrieve it, returning to find El had gone to the

vending machine to get them both drinks and was sitting on the bed waiting for him. She had even gotten ice.

As they ate they talked about the next day and what they would do.

“Tomorrow we’ll meet Mark Hamill and we have a photo op with him at 3:00. Or it’s supposed to be at 3:00. Hopefully they’ll be on schedule. But we should try to get his signature before then so that’s out of the way.” Mike said.

“Do you want to do the photo op together? I mean, we don’t *have* to but I’d like to. Only if you want though.” El asked.

“Definitely. And since you have your own we could do two and do different poses in each. Would that be okay?”

El smiled. “Let’s do one where we’re just smiling like normal but in the other one we should think of something cool or funny to do.”

“Okay, that sounds like an awesome plan. We’ll think of something.”

“Did you see anything you’re going to buy?” El asked, leaving her crust on the plate and reaching for another slice of pizza.

“I’m going to get a shirt at least. I really just like to see everything. Plus we got the cool stuff with our tickets. All the other money goes to meeting guests. I’m glad I’m not trying to meet too many because some are priced so ridiculously. Felicity Jones was \$400 for a signature last year. No thanks, Felicity.” Mike shook his head.

“Bye, Felicity.” El laughed.

“What are you going to wear in our picture with Mark Hamill?” Mike asked. “I want to wear our costumes again tomorrow but not in the picture. I want to just be us in that.”

“Me too. I’ll probably wear another Star Wars shirt. I’ll wear one with him on it. And jeans. It was chilly in shorts down there this morning.”

“I’m wearing jeans as well but you may have to help me choose which shirt.” Mike said.

“That won’t be a problem. Tomorrow will be fun.”

They finished eating and were both tired so they brushed their teeth and got into bed. El snuggled against Mike and felt content when he wrapped his arm around her and held her close. They were lying in the dark about to drift off to sleep.

“We don’t have to go down as early in the morning if you don’t want.” Mike whispered.

“Is that your way of saying you’ll take that shower with me?”

Mike laughed and kissed her forehead. “I love you. You just get me.”

They were still up by 9:00 the next morning. As planned, they showered together which turned out to be way hotter than either of them had imagined. The hotel was a nice one with a real bathtub and tile on the shower walls instead of some plastic molded one piece shower. A very soapy Mike held El against the wall as the water poured over them, El’s legs wrapped around him to help keep herself up, suds slipping down their bodies. When El felt herself nearing the peak she bit her lip so as not to cry out, not wanting the neighbors to hear. Mike pushed himself in once more and they came together. It was the first time either of them had experienced shower sex. Mike helped her rinse the shampoo out of her hair and they wrapped each other in towels once they got out. They couldn’t stop grinning at each other.

El thought that Mike should wear his Star Wars shirt that had everyone on it, Luke holding his blaster instead of a lightsaber and Han and Leia shooting theirs, with Vader in the background, Chewie and the droids too. She wished she’d thought ahead and had saved the shirt she wore the previous morning since it was vintage and had Luke and Vader on it.

“Just wear it again. I’m sure it’s fine.” Mike suggested.

“But I wore it yesterday. What if it smells weird?” She worried.

Mike walked over to where she was standing beside her suitcase and found the shirt from the day before. She had only worn it for a few hours. He sniffed it, inhaling deeply. All he could smell was El’s lovely scent, like peaches mixed with her perfume. He thought it smelled pretty damn divine.

“El, just wear it. It doesn’t smell weird. And you’ll be happy you have it on in the picture.” Mike handed it to her.

El felt herself sigh. Mike seemed to always be able to make her feel better. She put the shirt on and finished getting herself dressed.

Once downstairs Mike steered El toward the restaurant in the hotel so they could have breakfast. Sitting a table over from them was Peter Mayhew, the original Chewbacca. He even winked at El and told them both good morning. El got into a conversation with him about waffles versus pancakes, both of them liking waffles more, and was surprised when he asked if she wanted to take a picture with him. Mike started to snap it but Peter Mayhew said, “your boyfriend can be in it too. I’ll hold the camera.” And then Chewbacca himself took a selfie of the three of them. El was smiling radiantly. The day had already started off better than she could have hoped.

While they were still at the table she sent a quick text to her dad and to Max, grouping them together to save time.

I’m having the best time! We were in a documentary yesterday. I just had breakfast with Chewbacca. Oh, and I LOVE MIKE! I’ll talk to you both later. Gotta go hang out with Luke Skywalker...

They finished eating and walked into the convention center again. It seemed a little more crowded than the day before but as the weekend approached Mike knew it would be that way.

They found the line for Mark Hamill. Their VIP status allowed them

to use a line pass to skip to the front of the line. El was so excited. When they got up to him he was warm and welcoming and reached across the table to shake both of their hands.

“Oh, my god. I love you! Will you sign these? You can write anything you want.” El was shaking.

“You love me? Is this guy here chopped liver?” Hamill asked her jokingly, motioning to Mike with his thumb.

“Oh, no, I really love him. I’m *in love* with him.” She turned to Mike and smiled. He was as red as a tomato.

Mark Hamill laughed. “Let me see...” He was looking at the pictures she had given him. One was of him with his green lightsaber from *Return of the Jedi* and the other was him manning the gun on the Millennium Falcon. El watched as he signed them.

“I can write anything?” He asked.

“Sure.” She nodded expectantly.

He signed the pictures. On the one of him from *Jedi* he wrote, *I love you too*, and on the one in the Falcon he wrote, *Time to get cocky!* He had signed them both.

“Thank you so much!” El was bouncing from one foot to the other, not even realizing she was being so hyper.

Mike handed him the picture he wanted signed. “You have yourself quite a little package there. She reminds me of someone...” Hamill motioned toward El. Mike smiled.

“Yeah, she’s the best. The absolute best.”

Mike was having him sign a picture from the scene where Vader cuts off his hand. He looked at what Hamill wrote.

Guess this makes me cool hand Luke... and had signed it. Mike snickered.

“Thanks, Mr. Hamill. So much.”

“Mr. Hamill is my dad!” He nodded to Mike and El and then was ready for his next attendee.

Mike and El walked over to an empty table. Mike had brought a couple of sleeves to put their pictures in to keep them safe and he wanted to slip them in as soon as the ink was dry.

“That was so awesome. He’s so funny!” El exclaimed.

“Yeah, that was great. Did you see what he wrote on mine? He’s hilarious!” Mike slid the pictures into the sleeves. “Let’s go buy a shirt. It’s almost noon. Do you want to go put our costumes on until like 2:00 and then change and get ready for our photo op with Mark Hamill?”

“Can we buy shirts after the photo op?”

“That’s probably a better idea. Come on, let’s go change.” He took her hand and they went back upstairs.

They were even more of a hit on Friday than they’d been on Thursday but there were also more people there. This time they got pics with droids, with Boba Fett, the Crimson Guard and Emperor Palpatine. They found someone dressed as an awesome Lando Calrissian so they had to take their picture with him. Lando got one for himself as well. Someone had a baby they had dressed as a tiny Kylo Ren and asked El to hold it. Mike stood next to El for the picture. The lady took one with Mike’s phone too, citing how precious the little family was and thanking them for doing it.

After a couple of hours making rounds and taking pictures they realized that they needed to go change again. The time had flown by, they were having so much fun. Mike’s phone was full of some of the best costume pictures he’d seen and it was only the second day. The best part was that he and El were in the very best pics. They made their way back through the hall to the elevators. They stepped inside the elevator car. Two stormtroopers and a Snaggletooth were

sharing the car with them so Mike took a selfie of all of them in the elevator. It was a great picture. He and El got off at their floor and quickly changed back into what they were going to wear for their picture with Mark Hamill.

El looked over at Mike, who had taken off his costume jacket and shirt and was putting on his t-shirt. When she saw how he looked in the costume pants, boots, and t-shirt she stopped him from changing further.

“Damn, you look so hot. Do not change your pants. Leave the holster and everything.”

Mike complied. El got dressed, ran her brush through her hair, and they were ready to go back downstairs. Before they left the room Mike kissed her. He had wanted to for hours now and took his chance when he got it. She let him linger as long as he wanted, relishing the feeling of his lips on hers. It always seemed to take her breath away at least a little.

“Ready?”

“Uh huh.” El could only get that much out and nod her head.

They checked the schedule when they got back down and everything seemed to be running smoothly. They went to where the photo would be taken, joining the line that had already formed. They weren't too far back though. The photo ops went quickly.

They chatted with some other fans until the line started to move. When they got to the photo op room they watched a couple of other people who were in line ahead of them have their picture taken with Hamill. When it was El's turn she handed security her ticket and Mike's as well, stating that they would both be in each picture. He nodded. El and Mike flanked Mark on either side and they all smiled for the camera.

“We have another one, but could we take a funny one for that?” El asked him.

"I remember you from earlier. You love me but are *in love* with him." El grinned. *Mark Hamill remembered me!*

"That's right." She smiled at Mike.

"Okay, I'm going to hug you like you belong to me." He pointed at Mike, "you try to look pissed that I'm doing it. Sound good?"

They both nodded in agreement. Mark Hamill hugged El closely with Mike standing behind them looking angry. It was perfect.

"Thanks again, guys." Hamill said as Mike and El were ushered away to allow the next person in.

They were told that they could wait a couple of minutes at a booth in the next room and their pictures would print out and they could have them right then, so they waited. They were ecstatic at what they saw when they got them. Both of the pictures had come out perfectly. They had also bought the JPEG of each picture so they would both have copies.

"What do you want to do now? Want to go buy those shirts?" Mike asked. It was almost 4:00. They hadn't eaten since breakfast and both of them were feeling hungry.

"Can we go find something to eat after we do that?"

"Definitely." Mike led her through the crowd to the special store inside that had all of the convention specific merchandise.

They each bought a shirt that had the date of the convention. They took their stuff back up to their room and El was lying on the bed looking at the program while Mike put everything away so the pictures wouldn't get bent. She checked her phone and saw that her dad had texted her back saying he was glad she was having fun. Max texted too. Her text simply said *LOVE??!!* El thought she'd get back to Max tomorrow.

"Do you want to go out somewhere? I know my way around Indianapolis pretty well. We could go on a date." Mike looked

hopeful.

The idea sounded great to El. She wanted to walk down the sidewalk with him hand in hand and eat at a little café where they could stare at one another.

“Yes. I’d love to do that.”

Mike drove them to an area where he could park that was close to Central Canal. There were little bridges that crossed it occasionally and small shops and little restaurants lined the streets there. He and El held hands and walked along, looking at the water. They found a café that looked nice and ate there, the cozy feeling inside the small place making it feel intimate. Afterwards it was starting to get dark but there were lights along the waterway and the streetlights reflected from the water itself. They walked across a bridge and stopped there, looking out at the city lights and the water below them.

Mike moved behind El and wrapped his arms around her, enveloping her. El thought the whole evening was very romantic.

“Did you have a good day today?” He asked, his voice low in her ear.

“Yes. The last two days have been the best ever.” She turned to face him.

They kissed in the middle of the bridge, surrounded by the city.

“Let’s go back to the hotel.” Mike saw the gleam in her eye and didn’t need to be told twice.

They spent the better part of the night wrapped around each other, both sweaty and exhausted when they were finished. Mike had made sure that for every one time he came she had come three times and both of their minds felt like jelly when they were finally too tired to continue. They felt sleep coming on, smiles on both of their faces, Mike knowing that there would be no way they would make it downstairs before noon the next day. But that was okay, as long as

they were together it was worth it. And they still had two days after Saturday.

“You said you had a surprise for me. When do I get that?” Mike asked. They were both on the edge of sleep, tangled together under the covers.

El smiled, though in the darkness he couldn’t see her. “You’ll get it soon. I think you’ll like it. Maybe sometime Sunday.”

“What is it? I need you to tell me!” He whined.

“Just be patient. It will be worth the wait. I really do promise.” She kissed him until she could tell his brow wasn’t furrowed anymore. “Go to sleep.”

“El?” A few minutes had passed and she was almost asleep.

“Hmm?”

“I love you. Good night.”

El felt him hug her tightly and was asleep in minutes, feeling more calm than she ever had.

Notes for the Chapter:

Still a few days to go at the con. El does have a pretty good surprise for Mike, at least he’ll think so. She’s not playing all of her cards at once though so he’ll have to wait a little bit more. We’ll see what they get up to in the next couple of days. As always, thanks so much for reading!

9. Chapter 9

Mike and El slept until almost 1:00 on Saturday, having been exhausted from the night before. Once they had finally gotten up and had dressed themselves they headed back downstairs to mingle in the crowds. El was wearing her cutoffs again and a very small Star Wars logo shirt, white with black rings on the sleeves and neck, that looked like it had come from the children's section of the store. Mike liked how it looked on her.

They went the opposite direction in the convention hall from the way they had gone every previous time, not realizing that they always took the same route. By going another way they noticed that they had missed some things in their prior outings, namely a 1:1 scale sized Jabba the Hutt on his throne. It was meant for pictures so Mike told El to climb up on it and pull the chain that had already been wrapped around Jabba's neck. She did her best impression of slave Leia, albeit in shorts and a t-shirt. Mike was very pleased with the pictures he took of her. They found some more people in great costumes so they got another fan to take their picture with Finn, Rey, and Poe Dameron and also with a Jedi Luke. The flap on his black uniform was turned back, revealing the light gray interior. His lightsaber was impeccable.

El wanted to wear their costumes again because she'd had so much fun taking pictures with people so she and Mike changed back into them. Mike waited patiently for her to fix her hair. Before they left the room she texted Max back from the day before. She included a picture of herself and Mike in their costumes.

Sorry I'm just now getting back to you. We're having so much fun! I'll tell you all about it when I get home. But I don't want to leave Mike. Oh my god, Max! O.M.G!

She left it at that and they went back down to the con. Mike had the room keys and his phone, all charged and ready to go.

Their main goal this time out was to have someone take their picture together in as many places as they could find. They took pictures in

front of t-shirt booths where they were both making silly faces, they took one beside a huge TIE fighter, a Mandalorian locked them inside the jail cell he was manning and took their picture, another guard standing watch beside them. El used her charm to round up one of every type of stormtrooper she could find and they took a picture with the entire squad of them. They were having a blast running around and posing.

While they were in the convention hall taking pictures of themselves, El noticed a group of college-aged girls that kept following them and giggling. At first she thought they were just following them but then she realized the girls were following *Mike* and she started to get annoyed. It was getting close to 6:00. A man dressed as Dengar and his little boy, who was dressed as a small Boba Fett, asked El if she would take a picture with them. She stepped over to pose with the duo, the wife of the man snapping the pic, and when she stepped away from Mike the girls surrounded him. She couldn't get back through their ranks. There were around twelve in total, all circling Mike and pushing their way closer to him. He was trying to get away. Finally El just pushed her way through, not caring if she happened use her nails at any point. Once he could reach her Mike pulled her the rest of the way through the girls, who by that time were literally inside his three feet of personal space. He hugged El, ignoring the girls.

"Let's get out of here," he said, feeling like the real Han Solo having to break their way through a group of armed villains. He held El close to him, pulling his blaster from its holster and holding it up, his arm bent at the elbow and the barrel pointed at the ceiling. They pushed through and kept on going, Mike looking back once to make sure the girls weren't still following them.

They made it out into the hallway by the elevators.

"Um, that was like, super hot what you just did," El said. Mike had re-holstered his blaster.

"Those girls were creeping me out. But it was fun to pretend we were escaping them."

El could only smile. She knew he had loved having to pretend to escape the horde.

“Hungry? Want to go change and then maybe we could come back to the restaurant here and eat? We can go somewhere out if you’d rather do that,” Mike said.

“We can eat here. We don’t have to go anywhere. Let’s go back to the room.” She held his hand and they boarded the next available elevator.

Back in the room El checked her phone before she had Mike unzip her dress and noticed that Max had texted her again.

That pic is adorable! Am I putting this together right? Are you in love? What does he say? I’d have you call me but I don’t want to take any time away from you.

El read the text. At first she laughed but then she read the last part and realized that Max was right. All her time with Mike was quickly slipping away. It was already Saturday evening and she had to board a flight home on Tuesday morning. Her time was running out. She wrote Max back.

I love him so much, Max. He loves me too. I don’t know what I’m going to do next week. For now I’m going to enjoy every second though. Love you!

Mike was waiting to unzip her. He noticed that her smile had faded. She turned around to give him access to the zipper.

“Are you okay? You were so happy and now you don’t look like you are.” Mike finished the zipper and El started putting her regular clothes back on. Mike was taking off his jacket and shirt.

“I’m fine. Mike, wear the pants. Holster too. I like how hot you look in them.” She looked more like her happier self when she’d said that so Mike felt a little better. He left his pants, holster, and boots on and donned a t-shirt.

The restaurant was a funny sight. There were lots of people in costume eating. Mike thought it looked a lot like the Mos Eisley cantina. He was glad he had his phone because there were a lot of things to photograph. It's not every day you see bounty hunters and stormtroopers eating chicken wings with Padme.

El and Mike were given a small table near the back of the restaurant. They could see all the people but the setting seemed more quiet than the front and the middle of the place. Mike could tell that El's spirits seemed a little down.

"What's wrong?" He asked.

She sighed. "Nothing. I don't want to put a damper on our fun." She played with her napkin.

"El, please understand that if you are feeling down or bad or whatever then I want to know so I can try to make it better. I don't want you to feel alone in whatever it is." He rested his hand over hers, the size covering her hand entirely.

"It's just that it's Saturday night. We'll only be together for two more days and then I have to leave you and go back home. I'm really going to miss you. I don't want to think about it now but I did and now I can't *stop* thinking about it."

"Hey, let's worry about that later, okay? Let's just enjoy our time together now and we can worry about Tuesday when it's Tuesday. Don't let the future ruin your present." He smiled at her as he squeezed her hand. "Please? We won't be saying goodbye. We'll just be away from each other for a bit. There's no way I'm not going to come see you as often as I can. We'll work something out. I promise we will."

His smile and confidence made her feel better.

"Come here," Mike said. Ordinarily him pulling her from her seat and into his lap would be weird in a restaurant but with all of the commotion from all the droids, monsters, and what seemed to be the entire Empire and Rebel Fleet eating there El sitting on Mike's lap

didn't seem to faze anyone. He held her to him and hugged her. "Do you want to just sit here with me while we eat?" He was kidding and she knew it.

El laughed. "No, silly. I can sit in my own chair. But I *do* feel better." She kissed the corner of his mouth. "Thank you."

It was then that the waiter arrived to take their order. El felt her cheeks warming as she slid back around into her own chair. The waiter didn't seem to care.

After they finished eating they walked around the downstairs of the convention area. The doors to the actual exhibit room were locked but they could look at the props on display in the main hall where the lobby was. They admired the huge AT-AT in the middle of a double stairway that led to the second floor lounge. Surprisingly there were only a few other people in the entire space near them.

There was a ledge in front of a water feature and Mike sat down. He could look at the underside of the AT-AT from where he sat. He pulled El back down to sit sideways on his lap. She rested her head on his shoulder and they both looked at the Imperial construct.

"I wonder how long it took them to get that thing in here," Mike mused. He was looking up at it.

"Mm-hmm, it is." El wasn't really paying attention to what he was saying, choosing instead to trace her finger along the leather of his holster. She slowly moved it down his leg and then back up, grazing his inner thigh as her hand made its way back up his leg. Mike forgot all about the Imperial Walker. Her bare legs on him were making him forget a lot of things. When she sat her shorts seemed even shorter. "Let's go back upstairs," she whispered in his ear.

The elevator was empty and they had nine floors to travel. Mike pushed her against the back wall and kissed her passionately. El's hands slipped underneath his shirt, feeling his muscles react to her touch. When the elevator stopped at their floor El's hair was a mess and their lips were swollen. They giggled on their way down the hall to their room. Once inside, El lifted the hem of Mike's t-shirt,

indicating that she wanted it gone. He stripped it off and then did the same to her. He was still standing up and started to move to the bed to sit down but she stopped him.

“No, stay here. You’re so hot in these pants. I’ve wanted to do this since yesterday.” Mike watched her sink to her knees and fumble with the button on his pants. The holster was slung around his waist at a slight angle and also attached to his mid-thigh so if she was careful she could unbutton and unzip his pants without removing the holster, which was her plan. She freed his already hardening member from his pants, smiling because he was still not wearing underwear with the costume. She reached around and unhooked her bra, letting it slide down until she shook it to the floor.

Mike looked down at her. She was looking at him as she took him into her mouth, her eyes locking with his. They were near the closet and he could also watch her from the mirror that was on the closet door. It was like watching a movie, watching her move up and down on him. He put his hand on the back of her head and liked how it looked in the mirror. He pushed her down a little, making her take him a bit deeper. He could feel himself get harder instantly when he felt the tip of his cock touch the back of her throat. She gagged slightly.

“Shit, I’m sorry.” He apologized. She just shook her head and continued going down on him. Each time she moved her head lower she tried to go a little deeper, letting her tongue run along the shaft on her way down and back up. Mike felt her put her hands on the backs of his thighs and pull herself closer to him, causing him to go even deeper, her lips suctioned to him and making him feel a tightening in his lower abdomen. He put both of his hands on her head, gently weaving his fingers into her hair, and watched himself in the mirror as he thrust into her mouth. She was still holding on tightly to the backs of his legs so he did it again.

“Oh, fuck, El. That feels so good. I’m about to come.” He warned her, still holding her head and moving with her.

El removed her mouth from him. He felt the suction stop as her lips slipped off his tip. “Then do it,” she said before she was back on him

again, taking him all the way down to the base of his shaft.

“Oh, my god,” Mike whispered, “you are the hottest thing ever. You want this?”

He felt her nod, still moving up and down on him, taking him deep as her head moved. Her tongue felt amazing and Mike couldn't hold back any longer. He looked in the mirror.

“El, oh, you're so good at that. Oh, shit! Oh, fuck. El, I'm coming...” He tried to watch himself but it was so overwhelming to feel her on him at that moment that his eyes closed involuntarily.

El tried her best to take it all but there was too much and she started to gag. Mike pulled himself out and wound up accidentally finishing the last of it on her chest. El didn't mind. It hadn't been Mike's fault, it was just location.

He pulled her to her feet and kissed her, thanking her for making him feel so good. He moved her to the bed and sat her down before disappearing into the bathroom. When he returned he had a warm washcloth that he used to clean her up. He gently rubbed the cloth over her chest, cleaning off any mess that he'd made on her. He was still wearing his pants, holster, and boots.

“God, you are still so fucking hot wearing that.” El told him as he finished cleaning her up.

“Think so? You look pretty hot yourself sitting there in those shorts. They look like they need to come off though. Would you like that?” Mike asked. His hands were already on the button of them.

El nodded and Mike pushed her back onto the bed so she was lying down. He removed her shorts, leaving her in just her panties.

“Mike, um, I think I need a night to recover. Last night was so amazing and I want tomorrow to be too so I don't think I can have sex tonight.” She sounded disappointed.

Mike smiled. “We don't have to do that. I know we were crazy last

night. What if I didn't do anything that was really on the inside? Could you handle that? I want to make you feel good too."

"I'll try anything." She laced her fingers in his hand.

"I'll be gentle." Mike kissed her abdomen and trailed kisses down over her panty covered front, all the way to her inner thighs. El sighed. "Is that okay?" Mike asked.

"Mmm, that's nice." El replied.

Mike removed her panties and proceeded to show El how much she meant to him and how gentle he could be. His tongue was manipulative and he massaged her with it, careful to not enter her. She grasped his hair and tried to push him into her harder but he wouldn't let her. He wanted to make sure she was feeling ready and wasn't going to let her emotions in the moment cause her to do something she had already said she needed to wait a day for. He could make her get to where she wanted to go without penetration.

"Please, Mike." El begged.

"Just relax. I don't want to hurt you. Let yourself just enjoy this. Wait, am I not doing a good job?"

"Oh, fuck, you're amazing. It just makes me want all of you. You're right though. Don't stop. You're so good at that."

Mike went back to teasing her. He was using his hand a bit but only on the outside. The combination was starting to really get her going. She was focusing on what she was feeling. Occasionally he would rub his nose on her before starting back with his tongue and it was driving her mad. She could feel herself climbing higher and higher, almost to the top of the cliff. She wanted to dive off the edge of it.

"Mike, I'm so close. You're doing so good." She felt him pull back so that his tongue was barely touching her but still making contact. That was going to send her over, she knew it. "Yes, do that. Oh, uhn, Mike! Don't stop! Miiiike!"

Mike didn't stop until she stopped writhing and calling his name. She finally settled down and Mike pulled himself up to kiss her.

"Still feel okay? I didn't hurt you did I?" He asked, so concerned.

"You were great. That was amazing." She rolled over and buried her head in his neck. "I don't want to leave you." She whispered.

He just held her and let her feel how she was feeling. He already knew he was going to make sure that she never had to feel that way for long. But right now he just wanted to enjoy the rest of his time here with her. He rubbed her back and whispered that he loved her.

He got up long enough to take off his boots and pants and then crawled back into bed beside El. He spooned her and held her as they went to sleep.

It rained on Sunday, causing the room to seem dark. The forecast said it would be raining all day. Mike and El had planned to attend a couple of panels, one where Mark Hamill, Anthony Daniels, and Jeremy Bulloch would discuss some things about *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, and another panel where engineers would discuss the finer points of creating droids. That one would be in the late afternoon.

They took their time getting dressed and eventually made their way down to the floor of the con. They held hands and looked closely at every booth, not wanting to miss buying something they wanted because they hadn't seen it. Mike bought El a Hoth Leia Funko Pop.

There was an exhibit of all of the helmets worn by the different characters. They hadn't really taken time to examine them before so now that they were just walking around they could really inspect them.

"Wow, El, I think your collection is almost as good as this. And look, there's no McQuarrie Vader here," Mike pointed out.

“Yeah, but I don’t have a biker scout helmet. Or an X-wing helmet like Luke’s. I can’t be in the Red Squadron.”

“That doesn’t mean you’ll *never* have one.” He bumped his shoulder against her playfully. She smiled at him.

As time drew nearer to their panel they went to find a good seat. Their VIP passes didn’t give them assigned seating but they were allowed to choose first and were happy to see that there were still a few seats left for VIPs in the front row, so they took two of those. They could see very well. When the actors came onto the stage El waved at Mark Hamill and he pointed at her and then put his hand over his heart, signaling that he loved her, and then gave a thumbs up to Mike. El was shocked that he recognized them and she turned to Mike, grabbing his hand and squeezing tightly, her smile reaching from ear to ear.

They sat rapt with attention for the entire hour of the panel, listening to stories about things that had gone wrong on the sets, how things were actually done, how the puppet of Yoda worked. They found it fascinating.

After the panel they got a sandwich to share and walked around some more. The droid panel was at 4:30 and it was only 2:00. They people watched for a while. There was so much to see. El saw a man dressed as Boba Fett pushing a baby stroller that had been made up to look like Han Solo frozen in carbonite. She saw a man in a Rancor suit, it looked like he had spent countless hours on it, and he was being led by what looked like a 5-year-old Gamorrean guard. She thought it was adorable.

Every time she looked over at Mike it made her smile, whether he was looking back at her or if he was looking at some merchandise in one of the booths with his brow furrowed, indicating that he was deep in thought. The feelings of love were almost overwhelming and she had to remind herself to breathe a couple of times. He caught her gazing at him and he smiled, his lopsided goofy grin making her heart beat faster and causing her to feel butterflies.

When it was time for the droid panel El wanted to take seats located more in the back and to the side. Mike didn't question it so they ended up sitting near the door on the edge of the seating area. El listened to the panel for a little while but then she leaned over to Mike.

"I'm going to go up to the room. Why don't you finish this and then come up when it's done?" She whispered.

"Do you feel okay?"

"Yeah, I'm just going to go lie down. You finish this. It'll be over in less than an hour. Okay?"

"Okay. If you're sure you feel okay." Mike said lowly.

"Don't worry. I do." She quietly got up and left the panel.

Once she had returned to the room, she was happy that the weather had made it dark. She closed the curtains anyway and found a scarf that she had thrown into her suitcase. She turned all of the lamps off except one and then draped the scarf over the one lamp that remained on. She was pleased with the ambience of the room.

She rummaged through her suitcase and found the smaller bag she had stowed in the bottom of it. She unzipped the bag and removed the contents, laying them out on the bed before removing the clothes that she was wearing. She made sure to pick up anything that was lying about on the floor, trying to make the room look presentable. They had left the *do not disturb* sign on the door every time they left the room so housekeeping had not been in there to clean. El tidied the place.

She was satisfied with how the room looked so she set about putting on what had taken her longer to make than both of the costumes they had been wearing that week. She pulled the panties on, which really couldn't be considered panties, more of like a sexy belt with maroon cloth that covered the front and back. It had taken her a while to find exactly the right pattern but once she embellished it with other things it looked almost screen accurate. She did the bra next, sliding

it into place before she put the vine-like arm band on her upper left arm and a somewhat matching wrist band on her right arm. She slipped the little boots on, which she thought she might never find while she was looking to complete the costume at home. She thought she looked pretty good, looking at herself in the mirror. Her hair wasn't long enough but that would have to be overlooked. She even had a chain for her neck, but would let Mike decide if he wanted to use it.

Lastly she brushed her teeth again and then laid on the bed and waited for him to come back from the panel.

She heard the keycard beep and then the doorknob turned. She had been waiting about twenty-five minutes. The excitement and anticipation was palpable. Mike walked into the room and froze.

"Holy shit." His eyes raked over her. He gulped. "Who are you?" Mike asked, knowing full well who she was but wanting to hear the dialogue that came after.

"Someone who loves you," El said. Mike was on the bed in two steps.

"Jesus, El, this is so fucking hot! I love you so much! You are so amazing," Mike said between kisses. It was like he didn't know where to put his hands, he was so excited.

"Do you really like it?" She asked. Mike had his mouth on her neck, his pants were unbuttoned and El was about to pull his shirt up over his head to get it off.

"Are you kidding? El, I already thought you were amazing. You just crossed the threshold into deism. You are a fucking goddess and I'm about to worship you."

Notes for the Chapter:

I've cut the chapter off here so I'll have more for my next one because this story will be coming to a close before too long. It kind of makes me sad but I can't

keep it going forever. I think two more chapters is all there will be. I know what will happen but I'm going to miss this Mileven. I love how nerdy they are, but sexy at the same time. And I know I've been updating a lot but I like writing this story and I can't wait to update just for the sake of waiting. If I have it I'm gonna post it. I have other ideas to work on when this is complete. But I've loved this, I can say that much. Thanks for reading. Hugs all around.

10. Chapter 10

He handled her like she was made of porcelain. El had thought the costume would cause him to be more animalistic but after the initial shock of seeing her in it, Mike was slow and careful with his ministrations. He had managed to tear himself away from her long enough to remove his clothes but was immediately kissing her again. She could feel his palms on her back, warm and gentle. It was beautiful but El hadn't wanted beautiful; she had her own fantasies about what it would be like to wear this costume.

Feeling his lips softly caress her collarbone, El pushed him back enough to look at him. "Mike, I made this costume for *us*. I'm not going to break. You can be a little rough. I like it." She watched his face as realization dawned on him.

She wants this as much as I ever did!

"I've thought about this so many times but this is more perfect than any fantasy I ever had. Because it's *you*." Mike moved his hands into her hair, letting his fingers get lost in her locks. "What do you want me to do?"

El's eyes bore into his own. "Everything you've ever wanted to do."

El watched as his eyes filled with desire. Then he was on her. She felt him gently bite her neck and heard herself moan. This was what she had wanted. To be taken, not treated like a treasure. At least not right now.

"You can take this off if you want." El said, breathing heavy as Mike continued to nip at the skin around her chest.

"No, leave it. I'll work around it. I'm not taking anything off of you right now. You look so good." His mouth had found her chest and while she was wearing the costume over her breasts he didn't let it stop him from sucking on each of them. El found that the sensation was exhilarating, the fabric causing friction when his tongue would pass over it. She cradled his head and pulled him into her. It was

her turn to notice the mirror. She had known it was there but hadn't yet gotten the chance to watch herself.

"Shit, that looks so good, Mike." She kissed his temple as she continued to watch the mirror.

"What?" Mike looked up. "Oh. You're watching me? That's so hot, El. Do you like what you see?" He went back to her breasts.

"Yes. It's turning me on even more."

Mike stopped again. "Then maybe I need to make sure you have something good to watch." He grinned at her wickedly and pulled her up from the bed so they both were standing beside it.

"First, an experiment. Look in the mirror and bend down toward the bed. Let me know when you can't see yourself anymore." Mike ran his fingers over her back as she bent down. She felt them slide over the fabric hanging from the back of her costume.

El bent forward over the edge of the bed, her head turned to the side and watching for when she disappeared from the mirror. To her relief she could still see herself even when her face was on the bed.

"I can still see even like this." She knew how she must look to him. She could see herself, bent down, her head lower than her ass. He was standing behind her and she was excited for what was about to happen.

"Good. You look so hot right now. I'm going to push this cloth aside. Is that okay?" He asked, his hands already reaching for the side of the cloth so he could move it.

"Yes, move it."

Mike reached around her and grabbed the front side of the fabric and moved both that and the back side to El's right so that it would be out of the way of her line of vision to the mirror. He stared at her bare lower half, the belt still in place causing her ass to be highlighted.

“Fuck, you look so amazing.” He stepped forward and she could feel his legs on the backs of her thighs. He was right up against her. To her surprise he leaned forward and she felt him kiss her shoulders and her neck. She turned her head toward the mirror again so she could watch everything he did.

She could feel how hard he was, pushed against her buttocks as he leaned forward. She pushed herself back against him, not even realizing she was doing it. He stayed where he was but moved his hands to her breasts, cupping each and squeezing lightly. They were both looking in the mirror.

“Mike, I want you.” El turned her head as far as she could, trying to kiss him. He met her lips with his own.

She felt him let go of her breasts and stand back up, his thighs never breaking contact with her own. She watched the mirror as he lined himself up with her, massaging her opening with his cock, sliding it back and forth and teasing her. She tried to move her hips so that he would slip in but he just grinned and kept pulling away when she would get close to catching him.

“Do you want that? Is that what you need?” Mike asked, still letting himself just glide easily through her folds, not coming close to moving inside yet.

“I need it, Mike. I do. I’ll do anything.” She panted. Watching him tease her was new and causing her to be more aroused than normal.

“I know you will and that’s why I’m going to give you what you want. You deserve to have what you want.” As he spoke he pulled back just a bit.

El felt him start to slip inside her. She pushed back, hard. “Show me what you’ve always wanted to do, Mike.” She was almost breathless but Mike heard all he needed to hear.

He pulled her back by her hips, watching the mirror as he did. He heard her gasp and looked down to see that she was watching too.

He wanted to give her a good show so he pulled almost all the way out before slamming back into her, watching her face in the mirror, loving how it looked.

“Oh, god, Mike! You’re so *deep*. And you look so g-good fu-fucking me...” Her voice trailed off as Mike continued to pound into her. She watched him thrusting into her from behind, loving how taut his muscles looked. She liked watching his hands pull her backwards into him as he slammed forward. She reached between her legs to stimulate herself more. Mike noticed and quickly reached around to replace her hand with his own, wanting to be in control of her pleasure. As soon as his hand touched her she knew it wouldn’t be long before she reached her peak. She watched the mirror again.

“Do you like watching me fuck you?” He asked, his voice a whisper. All of his energy was being channeled elsewhere.

“You look so hot doing it and it feels so *good*! I’m so close, Mike. Watching you fuck me like that is going to make me....” Her eyes closed and she stopped talking.

“Oh, fuck, El. I hope you’re coming right now because I can’t hold back. You feel too amazing and you’re right, watching myself fuck you is so hot.”

“Miiiiike!” The only thing she could say. He felt her spasm around him. Even her legs were shaking.

Mike felt relieved. He looked at the mirror, El with her face on the bed, also turned toward the mirror, sweat on her forehead causing her hair to stick to her face, her breasts moving slightly every time he moved forward into her. It was everything he wanted.

“You’re making me come, El. Oh, fuck, I love you.” Mike felt himself unload and turned his head so that he could watch El. She had pushed herself back into him again as he had thrust in for the last time. Mike could see her knees bent slightly to give her more traction. He thought it was amazing.

“That was so hot.” El said once they were cleaned up and in bed.

She was glad to be out of the slave Leia costume. It looked great but turned out to be not as comfortable she she'd hoped. She was lying halfway on Mike, her head and shoulders on his chest. He was running his fingers through her hair.

"Yeah it was. Doing that while watching myself do that might not be anything I can ever top." He chuckled.

"But we can try." El kissed him and snuggled in for sleep.

Darkness still blanketed the room even though the numbers on the clock indicated that it would be dawn soon. El was having a nightmare. Mike had jolted from his own slumber by her low cries that were getting louder, her thrashing causing her to accidentally kick him. He wanted to hold her to try to calm her down but she climbed out of bed and went toward the bathroom.

She splashed water on her face and looked in the mirror. She was shaking. The dream itself was already starting to fade but the feelings associated with it still remained. She felt alone and scared and tried to recall why. Then she remembered what had frightened her so much. She took a drink of water before padding back to the bed where Mike was sitting up, anxiously waiting for her to return.

As she got back into the bed he pulled her close. She had been trying not to cry but as soon as her cheek touched his shoulder hot tears spilled down her face.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Mike asked softly, rubbing her back and letting her cry.

"I lost you. We were walking in the woods, it kind of looked like Endor, and I turned around and you were gone. I couldn't find you anywhere. And all of a sudden it was dark and everything looked like a shadow. I ran, screaming your name, but I still couldn't find you. I know it was just a dream but it still felt real. I think it's because I'm scared to leave you tomorrow. I'm trying not to think about it but I know it was what I was thinking about right before I

fell asleep.”

“If it makes you feel better, I don’t want to leave you either. It’s going to be hard to walk away at the airport. I can’t even see you to the gate. I’ll have to just say goodbye and watch you go. It’s going to hurt. I’ll probably cry in my car.” Mike kissed her forehead.

“Can we just stay here all day today? Is there anything we’ll miss?” El asked. She was holding Mike’s hand and playing with his fingers absentmindedly.

“I think there’s a closing ceremony around 5:00 but we don’t have to go down there at all. We can stay here as long as you want. The sun isn’t even up yet. Do you want to watch something on TV?”

“No. Not right now anyway. I just want you to love me.”

So that’s what Mike did.

They ordered room service a little before lunch time, having fallen back to sleep after Mike reassured her in the best way. They ate in the bed, thinking that if they happened to spill something they could spend their last night in the other bed.

“Do you love your job?” El asked, removing onions from her salad.

“I don’t hate it. I always wanted to do something in the science field. I thought I’d be a doctor but I started to get burned out on school and knew I’d have years more of it to become a physician. I didn’t want to wait until I was almost 30 to start my life, you know?”

El nodded. Onions safely removed, she had commenced eating her salad.

“So by being an anesthesiology assistant I didn’t have to go to school for as long and but I get paid probably better than a family practice doctor would. I could have stayed in Atlanta where I went to school for that but it’s so hot down there. I just went back home to Indiana.” Mike had polished off most of his club sandwich. “Do you

love *your* job?”

El laughed. “I definitely do not, but I do love the school. I’m hoping I can use my Master’s in English or Library Science at UMaine. I had to go down to Augusta for the Library Science degree. I prefer Orono and Bangor. I like the small town atmosphere. So I’m just waiting for something better to open up for me there. I figure it’s not worth it to do what you want to do if you aren’t where you want to *be*. Is that dumb?”

Mike shook his head. “Definitely not dumb. I totally get it. I’ve never been to Maine but I read a lot of Stephen King, I can imagine what it’s like. Cabins on lakes, beautiful foliage, clowns in sewers...” El snorted at his comment.

“It is beautiful but we get a lot of snow in the winter, and then there’s mud season when the snow melts. Stephen King never writes about that, though maybe all of his monsters are just metaphors for the mud. But I love it there. I have Max but I don’t expect to live with her forever.” El trailed off. Mike noticed the sadness in her eyes.

“You won’t be alone, El.” Mike took her hand in his. “I’ll figure something out.”

They had finished their food so Mike cleared the bed so they could get back underneath the covers. He wanted to lighten the mood, wanting his last full day with her to be all about them in the moment and to not worry about tomorrow until tomorrow.

“Tell me about Max.” He said, wrapping his arms around El and feeling her hair on his chest.

“She’s awesome. She doesn’t take any shit and she doesn’t censor herself. I’d say she has no filter but she’s too smart for that. She just states things matter-of-factly. We’ve been friends since we were about thirteen. She moved to Maine from California when her parents got divorced. She always talked about going back out there to live but then she found snowboarding and has loved Maine ever since. She’s good with numbers and works at a credit union in

Bangor. What about *your* friends?"

"I've known them since we were kids. We were bullied at school and gravitated toward each other but we found we had a lot in common so we became really close. Lucas lived next door to me growing up."

"And what does he do now? Does he still live close?"

"No, none of them do actually. Lucas is an architect. Right now he's working on a building in Seattle but after that he could be in Los Angeles or New York or anywhere really. He goes where they want him and lots of people want him. He tries to fly back home when he can but without the Internet and phones I'd probably not see him much."

That's how it's about to be for us, El couldn't help but think to herself.

"He's always been focused and detail oriented. He's a no-nonsense kind of guy but very loyal. One time when we were kids the school bully, Troy, had planned to wait for me after school and was going to beat me up. Lucas somehow heard about the plan the day before and showed up to school with his slingshot, or *wrist rocket* as he liked to call it, and rocks in his backpack. He was waiting where he knew Troy planned to attack me and when Troy saw the look on his face and the slingshot cocked and aimed at him, he didn't bother me any more that whole semester."

El couldn't imagine anyone ever wanting to hurt Mike.

"I've known Dustin since the fourth grade when he moved to Hawkins. He's a funny guy and a great friend. He's the type to bear hug a total stranger. He's married and has a kid. I guess Stephen is almost two now? Yeah, I think that's right. But he lives in Minnesota where he works at a science museum. Same as Lucas, he tries to come home every now and then. His mom would kill him if she didn't get to see her grandson at least once a month."

"Will is an artist but he found out that it was very hard to pay his bills that way so he works at an art gallery in Chicago. He restores paintings and I think he's actually found his niche. He can still do his

own thing in his free time but his job also allows him to use his skills. He's happy there, but really busy. I've been friends with him since kindergarten. He's an old soul, very wise."

"So you don't really have anybody in Indiana?" El asked him.

"My parents live there with my younger sister. I see them when I see them. It's just as easy to call as to go home. I'm not especially close with my dad and while I love my mom, I don't need to live in the same town as she does. Holly, my younger sister, is going to be a senior this next school year and she has her own life. My older sister lives in New York with her boyfriend. I thought they'd be married by now."

El thought about the hospital in Bangor. She had been there when she kept having nosebleeds and her doctor wanted to run tests to rule out a tumor. She had been impressed with the care she received and wished that Mike could work at that hospital.

"So really you just work there? You aren't tied down to anything?" She asked, trying to make her question sound innocent instead of wistful.

"Well, it's a good job but the cool thing about what I do is that it's kind of a necessity so it's more like the job has *me* instead of me having the job."

"Because you're the smartest guy in the world." El laughed but her eyes said she thought she was speaking the truth. She threw her leg over him.

"Again? How did I get so lucky?" Mike asked as his hands moved to her waist.

"I think I'm the lucky one. Let's do this and then we can put on our costumes one last time and go down to the closing ceremony. I want to see it with you. Odds are that we might never get to experience it in the same way again." She kissed his chest.

"Never tell me the odds."

They were giggling as they dashed for the elevator, Mike having taken his time with his lovemaking and almost causing them to be late, but El didn't mind. As long as she was with Mike it didn't matter to her what they were doing. She loved how his eyes would light up when he talked about Star Wars though and she didn't want him to miss the ceremony because of her melancholy.

And she was glad that they had decided to attend it. It seemed like almost everyone was in costume, lightsabers waving about in the air, people were doing demonstrations of fighting. Her heart melted at the little kids all dressed up, several of them having been moved to the front so they could see and be photographed. Tiny Rey and BB-8 made her think about having kids for the first time. She pushed the thought to the back of her mind.

There was a huge screen and once the show had started and the host had welcomed everyone, the lights dimmed and a film started. John Williams' score played over a montage of footage from the entire convention. El was crying. She looked at Mike and saw that he had tears in his eyes as well. Four minutes into the film they saw themselves, both shocked to have made the cut of the footage. They were on the carbonite chamber set and even though the music was playing over any dialogue they, and everyone else, could read their lips. The audience gave a collective *Awwwww* as Mike said *I know*.

El blushed but Mike grinned, kissing her quickly so that they didn't miss any of the film.

They took more pictures with people, everyone in costume this time. El wanted some pics of the kids so Mike snapped away at the tots, marveling at how serious the kids were taking their characters. He swore to himself that if he ever had a kid he would dress them up as characters from Star Wars, every Halloween, every convention, Tuesdays.

When they got back to the room Mike started removing his costume. He was folding it. El watched him and suddenly buried her face in her hands.

“What’s the matter?” He was next to her in an instant.

“That’s the last time you’ll take that off. I’m about to ask you to unzip this dress for the last time. Everything we do from here on out will be for the *last time*.” Soft sobs were escaping while tears poured through her fingers as she covered her face with them.

Mike knelt in front of her. She was sitting on the edge of the bed.

“El, look at me.” She removed her hands and he saw the pain on her face. “I love you. I love you whether you’re sitting right in front of me or in another state, or even another country for that matter. We won’t be apart forever. I promise. I can’t be without you either. I will think of something.” Mike brushed her tears away and made her look at him. “Okay?”

She nodded slowly, her eyes still full of sadness. Mike kissed her softly, then deepened the kiss. He was feeling the same way she was so he understood her sadness.

“Come here. I’ll help you out of this. But it won’t be for the *last time*. Okay? Nothing is for the last time. Not with us.”

He moved her himself, turning her around so he could unzip the dress. Once he had, he kissed the back of her neck before moving her to the bed, tucking her underneath the covers while he folded her costume and set it beside his. It was only 7:30 but he got into bed beside her and held her while she finished crying. He had two sisters. He knew that sometimes just crying was what was needed.

He ordered room service again, thinking it was easier than going out or really getting dressed. Despite El saying she wasn’t hungry he wanted her to eat because he knew she wouldn’t eat much the next day flying home and he also knew she had burned a lot of calories that day. If he was hungry she *had* to be. Wanting to cheer her up, he used his most charming voice to plead with room service so that they would let him order breakfast foods at night. They finally agreed to send him waffles and bacon if he tipped well. He ordered

the same for both of them.

When he brought the cart with the food on it to El's bedside he removed the silver covers over the plates.

"You got me waffles?" She smiled, her *real* smile, and Mike felt his chest ache.

"I want you to eat. I know you said you weren't hungry but I am and I want you to eat with me." He sat down on her side of the bed. She had moved her legs and was sitting up. He noticed that she wasted no time grabbing a piece of bacon and he knew he had been right.

"You're too amazing. I don't know how you were single when I met you." El said as she munched on the bacon.

"I hadn't met *you* yet. That's how."

They ate their breakfast for dinner, Mike feeling good about getting El into better spirits, making her laugh as he told her stories about teasing his sister when she was in high school, about building blanket forts and exploring the woods near his house with his friends when he was younger.

"It was like *Stand By Me* but without a dead kid and not narrated by Richard Dreyfuss. There were train tracks though. We played on them. We'd put pennies on the track and wait for a train to smash them, then spend ten minutes searching for the pennies. They never stayed where we put them. One time we found a bunch of corn, which blew our minds. But now I think it must have been from a train car carrying grain, so not really the huge mystery we thought it was."

Her laugh was like listening to his favorite music. He wanted to never stop hearing it. When they had finished eating they watched a couple of episodes of *Rick and Morty* and Mike fell even more in love, if that was even possible, when El did her best Rick impression.

"Because that's what this is all about, Morty." El said, trying to sound like Rick Sanchez. "I want that Mulan McNugget sauce,

Morty! That's my series arc, Morty.” Mike was rolling, clutching his stomach. Hearing her do that was maybe the funniest thing he'd seen. He loved how her face changed when she tried to do Rick's voice, making her look even cuter if that was a possibility.

Mike tried to pull himself together. “Oh Jeez, Rick.” His Morty impression might not be as good as El's Rick but it made her smile brightly at him before she kissed him, so he was happy.

As the night progressed they both knew that the countdown had officially started. El had glanced at the clock, which read 9:20, and realized that in just twelve hours she would already be in the air, traveling *away* from Mike. He didn't even question her when she threw her arms around him and hugged him as tightly as she could, wanting to be as close to him as possible.

“It's okay.” He rubbed her back but felt tears stinging his own eyes. “We have tonight. Let's make it count.”

El climbed into his lap, her legs on either side of him. She let him hold her close before she raised her head from his chest and looked deep into his eyes. Looking into his eyes always made her feel better and this was no exception. She leaned in and they kissed, softly, slowly, and then with much more passion. El had tears streaming down her face but she didn't let it stop her. They showed each other how much they would be missed, both wanting to memorize every minute detail, wanting to hold on to the moment for as long as they could.

When they finally did turn out the lights to try to sleep, El snuggled against Mike. He heard her sigh and the dam broke. Mike tried to stifle his tears but he was shaking too so it didn't matter.

“Mike?” El asked, raising up to look at him closely.

“I'm going to miss you so much. I guess I finally let myself think about tomorrow. I was thinking about tomorrow night and how I'll go home to an empty house and I'll miss you so much. Then I'll go to bed and you won't be there. I'm sorry I'm being such a pussy.” He sniffed and tried to wipe his tears but felt El's hand on his face before

he could wipe them away. She leaned in and kissed each tear away, finally letting her lips rest gently on his.

“I love you. So much.” Her whispered words made him feel better. Hearing how confident she sounded when she said them, he knew she believed it with everything she was. She hugged him and snuggled back into him.

Mike breathed her in and held her close. He wanted to stay like that forever. Time had other plans though and he knew it.

Notes for the Chapter:

El has to leave him in the morning. I'm as choked up about it as she is. What will happen to them? Everyone always says they'll make it work but will they? Thanks for reading!

11. Chapter 11

Mike did not sleep well. He discovered that he didn't really mind though, not that night at least. The light from the digital clock on the nightstand emitted a soft glow that lit El's face just enough that he could see her, so he spent the majority of his last night with her gazing at the way she looked in sleep and listening to her breathe softly. He could tell she was dreaming at one point and thought he might melt when she smiled. Apparently it was a good dream. For that he was happy.

He knew her flight was at 9:00 so they wouldn't have much time in the morning. The clock said it was 5:15. Mike eased out of the bed. El only had two bags so it wouldn't take her long to pack her things, all she really had to do was shower and get dressed. He found the complimentary note pad and pen the hotel provided and went into the bathroom so he could turn on a light and see what he was writing. Once he was satisfied he crept back into the room and found her copy of *NOS4A2* sitting on the desk. Her bookmark was nestled about half way through the book so he opened to that page and placed his note inside where she wouldn't see it until she started to read again. When he got back into bed with her she moved closer to him, her eyes still closed. He loved the way she felt against him, how her arms sought him out even in sleep.

He was lying in the bed, holding her and committing her scent to memory when he heard her speak.

"What time is it?" She asked, not raising her head from his chest.

"It's almost 5:30."

El sighed. Mike felt her squeeze him tighter. "We only have like an hour before we have to get up. I only have an hour to lie here with you." Mike could hear her voice trembling.

"Hey, don't cry." Mike lifted her chin and their lips met. He tried to reassure her but he felt like his heart was breaking a little bit too. The kiss deepened and they spent their last hour in bed showing how

much they loved each other.

“Remember what I feel like,” El whispered.

“I’ll never forget. I could never forget.” Mike assured her.

Time seemed to move too fast for them. Before they knew it the clock said it was 6:30, time to get dressed and packed. Mike packed his suitcase while El was in the shower. He walked past the bathroom and heard her crying softly.

El was trying to be quiet. She knew she was just being emotional, that she would talk to Mike that night like they always had. She just felt like she was leaving a piece of her behind. Before she had really met him it had been fine to fantasize and project and hope but now that they had been together, the feelings were all so real and so powerful and she didn’t know how she was going to be able to just walk away from him. She was leaning against the wall of the shower with her face in the crook of her arm, trying to muffle the sounds of her tears when she felt hands gently pull her back and turn her around. Mike was standing there and he looked as sad as she felt. He just held her and let her cry into his chest, rubbing her back while she did.

He washed her hair, using her strawberry shampoo and massaging her scalp once she had gotten control of her crying. His eyes never left hers as he rubbed the shampoo into her hair, careful to not let it get in her eyes. His own hair had gotten wet and was flopping into his face so El reached up and brushed it back, moving up on her tip toes and kissing him before he tilted her head back under the spray to rinse the soap away.

When they were finished Mike wrapped a towel around her, kissing her again as he pulled it around her shoulders, not wanting her to be cold.

“I guess it’s time to get dressed.” Mike sounded forlorn, a sigh escaping from deep within his chest.

El nodded, thinking the less she spoke the less chance she’d have to

break down crying again.

It was almost 7:00 when they had everything together and were ready to go to the airport. Mike had put one of his t-shirts into her suitcase when she wasn't looking, hoping when she found it later at home it would make her feel better. He knew there was no way it didn't smell like him.

"Ready?" He asked, picking up his suitcase in one hand and the larger of her two in his other.

"No." El replied, but she had her carry on and opened the door for them to step out into the hallway.

Mike checked out of the hotel and they loaded their bags into his car. On the way to the airport he tried to cheer her up by singing along to the music that was playing in his car, a flash drive that was playing *Summer's Kiss* by The Afghan Whigs. From the corner of his eye he saw El smile.

He parked in the cheapest lot at the airport. Most people would just pull up curbside and drop off their passengers but he wanted to stay with El for as long as he could. He carried her bags for her as they made their way into the airport. Mike waited while she checked her larger bag and received her boarding pass from the counter. Her gate was at the end of the concourse and Mike could only go as far as the security checkpoint without a ticket.

They stood together, holding on to each other as people hurried past them on their way to their own destinations.

"I had the best time with you this week," Mike said as he pulled her closer to him, still looking into her eyes.

"So did I." El's bottom lip was starting to tremble. She was digging her fingers into Mike's arms and trying not to cry. Mike pulled her the rest of the way to him, his hand moving to the back of her head as she started to sob into his chest.

"Shh. It's okay to cry if you need to." He felt his own tears welling

up.

"I'm going to miss you," El said. She was trying to control her emotions but the words came out syncopated by her sobs.

"I'm going to miss you too. But hey, look at me." Mike tilted her head up to his face. Her eyes glistened with her tears. "It won't be forever. I will see you soon. This isn't goodbye. You have to believe that." He kissed her softly.

"It's just hard to leave. I don't *want* to leave you." El buried her face in his chest once more.

"I know. I wish you didn't have to go. But I'll find a way to be with you." Mike gently rocked back and forth on his feet.

"Do you promise?" El liked his comfortable swaying motion while he was holding her but she pulled back enough to see him when she asked.

"Promise." Time was running out. She was going to have to check in at her gate very soon. Mike kissed her, tilting his head with hers, allowing their lips to softly mingle before their tongues found ways to deepen the kiss, not caring if people were looking at them. All they cared about was making the other know how much they meant and words weren't enough. Finally they drew back from each other enough to rest their foreheads together.

"I have to go." El's voice was a whisper.

"I know. I love you, El."

She kissed him one last time. "I love you too, Mike."

Mike watched as she walked down the long hallway of the concourse. She turned around twice to see him still there. He waved at her and she gave a sad wave back. He checked the time. It was 8:15. She would be boarding soon. Once he could no longer see her he went back to his car. He sat in the parking lot of the airport and cried. He had held it together inside because El was already so

emotional but now he let himself feel, and he felt empty and full at the same time. He was so in love but she wasn't here now. He knew he had to find a way to be with her again.

El looked out the window of the plane and watched the clouds roll by. The flight to New York wasn't particularly long so she didn't want to read. She only wanted to remember the week and play everything back in her mind. She already missed Mike. She wasn't looking forward to the three hour wait she'd have before her flight from New York to Bangor. She just wanted to be finished traveling already. She wanted to be home, to hear Mike's voice on the line. It was the best she could hope for now.

In New York she remembered that Mike had wanted her to try to eat something if she could so she bought a muffin from a little bakery but only ate half of it. She still had more than two hours to wait so she went to her gate and found a place to sit and read until it was time. She got her copy of *NOS4A2* out of her carry on bag and opened it to where she had placed her bookmark a few days before. Tucked into the binding was a note. With slightly shaky hands El pulled it free to read it.

El,

If someone had told me I'd ever feel this way I wouldn't have believed them. I always thought I'd probably fall in love someday but it hadn't happened and I didn't know just what that felt like until I met you. You heighten my senses, you make me think, you make me laugh. Nothing has ever felt as good as holding you. I would do anything for you and I plan to show you that. I love you, though that phrase doesn't scratch the surface of how I feel about you.

This past week was amazing in every sense of the word. Everything I did with you was the best experience of my life. So far. This week will always be cherished but we will make more memories that will be just as special. There will be so many, El. I promise.

Call me when you get home. I will stop anything to talk to you. Remember that I love you. Always.

Mike

El read the note three times. She could feel silent tears running down her face but she was smiling. She wiped her tears away, placing the note carefully back in her book, vowing to keep it forever. She sent Max a text before she boarded her next plane so that Max would remember to pick her up from the airport.

My plane should arrive around 4:00. Want me to text you when I get to Bangor or would you rather just be there waiting?

A minute later Max replied.

I'll be there before 4:00. Are you okay?

El sighed before texting her back.

No. But yes. I'll see you in a few hours. Thanks, Max.

El finally got off the plane at Bangor International Airport. She took the escalator down to baggage claim and Max, noticing her friend's striking red hair from the escalator.

"El!" Max ran to hug her. After their reunion they claimed El's suitcase and made their way to Max's car. El was quiet the entire ride home. Max let her be, knowing that El was feeling sad and missing Mike.

Once back at their apartment Max asked if El wanted any dinner, to which El declined. She went to her room and started to unpack her things. As she removed items from her suitcase she came across Mike's shirt. She held it close to her, embracing it and inhaling as she did. The smell of *Mike* permeated the air around her face and she immediately felt more relaxed.

She told Max she was going to go to bed a little early. The flights and waiting and being so emotional all day had made her tired, which she hadn't realized until she saw her own bed and sat down on it. She put Mike's shirt on, pulling it around her like a hug, and then

called him from her bed.

“You made it. I’m glad you’re safe.”

“I just unpacked. I found your shirt. And your note. I really needed that. Thank you. I love you.” El was lying back on her bed. “I’m so tired.”

“Then just relax. I’ll talk to you until you fall asleep. Want me to?” Mike asked. His voice was soothing and El could already feel herself relaxing.

“I want to hear your voice forever.”

Every time Mike was at work the next couple of months he talked with the hospital administrator and the lead anesthesiologist he worked under. He wanted to transfer. He had already looked into hospitals in central Maine and had found an opening at St. Joseph Hospital but needed clearance from his own supervisors before he could try to get an interview. The anesthesiologist he worked under was sympathetic to him. They had lunch one Thursday.

“It’s a decent hospital. I don’t think it’s as good as this one but that could work in your favor. You are great at what you do, Mike. If you leave I’ll miss having you around but I understand. There was a girl I met in medical school and I still wish I’d had the balls to follow her when she went to work in Washington when we graduated. I don’t know that I was in love with her but the potential for it was definitely there. I still wonder what might have been. You’re young and if you need to do this, I will write any recommendations for you that you need me to.”

“Thanks. I love working here but I love her *more*. I’d do anything for her.” Mike said.

“I’ll tell you what. I’ll call St. Joseph’s and talk to their chief of staff. I’ll tell them all about you and how meticulous you are with your work. I’ll see what I can do to speed things along for you.”

“You’d do that? That would be great. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate it.” Mike’s eyes lit up with hope.

“Just get your girl, Mike. Don’t make yourself wonder *what might have been.*”

El spent her time working. She had heard that there was an opening in the Fogler library at UMaine and she had applied, hoping to at least move to where she wanted to work on campus. She loved to be around books. She talked to Mike every night, most nights falling asleep with him on the phone. The leaves were just starting to change from the greens of summer to the vibrant colors of fall, the maple trees starting to turn a deep scarlet color while the ash and birches went a deep yellow. It was lovely and El wished that Mike was there to see it with her. She wanted to take walks in the woods with him, holding his hand as they admired the scenery.

In mid-September El found out that the position at the library was hers if she wanted it. She gladly accepted, calling Mike to tell him as soon as she got home. He didn’t answer so she sent him a text.

I got the job at the library! I’m so excited! Call me when you can. Love you so much.

When he called that night he was excited for her but she thought he seemed distracted. He still talked to her until they both fell asleep. El wanted to know what was on his mind but she decided he’d talk about it when he was ready.

It was the beginning of October. The autumn winds were starting to blow chilly and cold but El loved autumn in Maine. It was Friday and she had gotten off work early, walking past Memorial Union to the faculty parking lot behind it. She walked slowly, liking the brisk feeling of the wind on her cheeks and the way the branches swayed in the breeze. She had texted Mike earlier in the day but hadn’t yet had a reply from him. She figured he was in surgery. Around 4:00 she tried calling him but there was no answer. She was starting to get worried, having hardly ever not been able to get in touch with

him before. She sent him one more text.

Call me when you can? I just want to hear your voice.

Max got home a little before 6:00 and started cooking dinner. She was really getting into the cooking class she was taking and decided that cooking was a nice way to relax after a day full of numbers and accounts. She liked having El be her personal taste tester. El still hadn't heard from Mike all day and was feeling herself start to move from kind of worried to actually worried. She called him again. The relief she felt when he answered was almost overwhelming. She hadn't realized she'd gotten so stressed about it.

"There you are." El said, feeling her shoulders relax. She went into her bedroom to have a little privacy while she talked to him.

"I'm sorry. I was kind of in meetings all day. I wasn't ignoring you, I just couldn't check my phone."

He sounded happy to El. She could tell through the phone that he was smiling as he talked.

"What are you doing? It sounds like you're in a car." El could hear more noise than she usually heard when he was talking to her from home.

"Yeah, I'm on my way home. Home, you know, the place I want to be." He was still smiling. She knew it.

"I wish I was at your home. I miss you." El said sadly. She tried to keep it in check but sometimes it slipped out.

"I miss you too."

They talked about El's new job and how that was going. El was telling Mike about how they were rearranging the entire library and were currently in the reference section.

There was a knock on the front door and Max yelled to El. "El, can you get the door?" El didn't hear her. There was another knock and

Max huffed with annoyance as she crossed the living room to see who was knocking. When she opened the door there was a tall guy with floppy black hair that she recognized immediately from his pictures. He put his finger over his mouth, indicating for her to be quiet, as he continued talking on his phone. Max smiled and moved aside, allowing him to enter the apartment. She pointed down the hall, letting him know with her thumb to go to the door on the left.

El was lying on her bed crossways, looking at the ceiling and still talking away about the library. Mike stopped her mid-sentence.

“I really miss you, El.”

El sat up on her bed. As she started to speak she didn’t see her doorknob turning. “I really miss you too.” Her door opened. She looked up and there he was.

El dropped her phone and looked at him. It was clear that she wasn’t sure she was actually seeing him or if her imagination was playing tricks on her. He walked into the room and stood in front of her for a second, just looking at her, before both of his hands went to the sides of her face as he knelt down, their faces centimeters apart.

“Hi. I needed to see you.” Mike said, his voice for real and not coming through a phone causing El’s heart to race. She was already shaking.

“Oh, Mike.” She threw her arms around him as he kissed her. She had missed that so much, not realizing how much until she felt his lips on hers, greedily kissing him back and never wanting it to end.

They kissed and held each other for a few minutes until they heard Max clear her throat. She was standing in the doorway of El’s bedroom.

“Um, dinner is almost ready if you guys are hungry.” She said. Mike and El could not stop smiling at each other as they pulled apart and Mike stood back up.

“Max, this is Mike.” El said, her voice almost a giggle.

"I put that together. Hi, Mike. It's nice to meet you. El has told me everything about you." Max smirked.

"Max!"

Mike blushed. "Hi, Max. It's nice to meet you too." He smiled warmly.

The trio went back down the hall to the kitchen to have some dinner. Mike and El couldn't keep their hands off each other as they sat at the small table eating the food Max had made.

"I can't believe you're here." El said, her eyes dancing with glee that she was able to look across her table and see the love of her life staring back at her.

"I was hoping after dinner we could go for a walk or something. I need to talk to you."

Now El was feeling a little apprehensive. In her experience personal face to face talks were either very *good* or very *bad*.

"Okay. I could show you around campus if you want. It's not far."

"That sounds perfect."

After dinner Mike had excused himself to the bathroom for a minute. El pulled Max aside.

"What if this is bad? What if he wants to break up with me but he's too nice to do it over the phone? What if he never wants to see me again?" El was speaking so fast that Max almost slapped her to bring her back to her senses.

"El, listen to me. You're freaking yourself out. He looks so happy to see you. He stared at you with a dopey grin on his face throughout our entire dinner. *Breathe*. He is not going to break up with you. Just see what happens and stop being crazy."

El knew Max was probably right. Max was *always* right. When Mike came back Max gave her one last encouraging smile before they got into El's car and she drove over to campus. They walked hand in hand toward the Stillwater river. El loved how warm his hand felt in hers even though it was definitely chilly outside. They came to a bench that overlooked the river. There were lights hung from the trees, small white ones that had been placed for a wedding that would be held there the next day.

Mike and El sat on the bench and looked out at the water. The sun had set a couple of hours before but the lights bounced off the gentle current.

"I need to tell you something." Mike spoke. He had her hand in his and was rubbing circles on the back of it. El immediately braced for the worst.

"You can tell me anything." She tried to hide her rising fear.

Mike turned to look at her. "I love you and I want to be near you all the time. Would that be okay with you? Is that what you want too?"

El couldn't believe he was asking her that. All she wanted was to be with him.

"It's what I want more than anything. I love you too." She gripped his hand tighter.

Mike smiled, seeming relieved. "Good. Do you know what I was doing all day today?"

El shook her head.

"I flew in early this morning. Like, *early*. And then I spent the day at St. Joseph Hospital interviewing for a job there. El, it's mine if I want it."

El was crying immediately. Smiling through her tears she threw herself into Mike, his arms wrapping around her snugly as they both

cried and laughed into each other.

“You’re going to take it, right?” El asked once they had calmed down. They were just sitting on the bench holding each other.

“Nah, I think I’ll consider my options first...” Mike waited for her to look at him in exasperation. He could have counted it down. When he saw her face he pulled her down and kissed her. “Of course I’m going to take it. I want to be with *you*.”

As they were walking back to El’s car she asked him how long until he had to go back to Indiana and when he was supposed to start his new job.

“I was hoping you’d let me spend the rest of the weekend with you and then I’ll fly back Monday morning. I’m supposed to start on October 22nd so that doesn’t give me a lot of time to pack my things and find an apartment here.”

“I wouldn’t let you stay anywhere else. I can’t believe I get to sleep in the same bed as you tonight. I’ve been waiting for so long. I could look for an apartment for you if you wanted. I like to think I know what you like.”

“That would be the best. Hey, El? Um, no. Never mind.” Mike stopped what he was saying.

“Mike, what is it?”

“It’s just, I wish we could have an apartment *together*.”

El stopped him in the middle of the sidewalk. She stood in front of him, her face below his until he looked down at her, bridging the gap. Her eyes sparkled in the light of the street lamp. She raised up on her feet so that she was as close to him as she could make herself without him helping.

“I want that. I will totally live with you, Mike.”

They kissed under the street lamp, leaves swirling around their feet

as the wind casually blew.

Notes for the Chapter:

So Mike is moving to Maine! Raise your steins, y'all! I think maybe one more chapter and possibly an epilogue is all I can squeeze out of this with the title being what it is. It's been cathartic to write it and I will miss them but I have a couple of other ideas I want to work on when I'm finished with this. Thanks again for reading it and I hope it's been enjoyable. I love these two so much. I hope I do them justice. I will update again soon.

12. Chapter 12

Mike and El spent a blissful weekend in bed before he had to go back to Indiana, but unlike the previous time they'd had to part, they were happy and focused on the future. Mike only had a few weeks before he was to start his new job so El immediately began the search for a place for them both to live. They had decided that since she still had some vacation time she would fly out to Indiana and make the trip back to Maine with Mike in his car with his belongings.

She found a nice two bedroom apartment in downtown Bangor that she thought would work for them, at least for the time being. She was already letting herself think about getting a house with him. *Stop it, El. You're moving too fast.*

Max helped her start to box up her collectibles. At first El was hesitant to tell Max that she would be moving out but was relieved to find that it was something Max had already thought about and after seeing her with Mike knew that it wouldn't be long before she no longer lived with El, whether Mike moved or not. She could tell that the two would do whatever was needed to be together. Wanting to help, Max found a moving company to move El's bed and a few larger pieces while they were on their way back. At least they wouldn't have to sleep on the floor their first night in their new place.

Two weeks later Mike was waiting at the airport again for El, a confident smile on his face as he saw her walking down the concourse toward him. She ran to him once she had spotted him. Her excitement was palpable. The plan was to go the next day back to Mike's hometown and meet his parents, something Mike wasn't really wanting to do but El had insisted that she meet them before he left them to move to be with her. She didn't want them to think she had stolen their son.

Meeting Mike's parents went very well. His mother turned out to be kind and while his father didn't seem particularly interested in anything he was nice enough to El. She could tell Mike didn't really want to be there though so they ate lunch with them and then were

on their way back rather quickly to Mike's place to finish packing. Mike was satisfied that they'd met El but he was more satisfied that meeting them had made El feel more at ease.

As they packed Mike's things into his car, Mike felt like he was going to college for the first time. He realized that he really didn't have that much stuff. He had rented a small U-haul but it was nowhere near full. El laughed when she saw him standing in the trailer, bent down so he would fit.

"Don't worry, I'll share with you." She stepped into the trailer with him, wrapping her arms around him awkwardly since he was bent over.

"I really thought I had more things. I have my Star Wars stuff, clothes, books, computer, and television. How sad is that?"

El kissed his nose. "Not sad. Efficient."

They started their journey back to Maine the next morning. El was in the front passenger seat with her sunglasses on and her phone out. She wanted to document the trip back. Mike started the car and looked at her. She was filming.

"Ready?"

"Let's go home." El said, smiling brightly at him. She was using the front camera so she could get both of them in the frame.

"As long as I'm with you I *am* home, El."

It was a long trip back but they loved every minute since they were doing it together. El drove when she thought Mike looked tired and Mike handled the traffic in the bigger places like New York and through Massachusetts. When they finally crossed into Maine Mike told El about a surprise he had for her.

"It's not as awesome as the surprise you had for me at the convention," he looked at her lovingly, "but I think you'll like it. It's

for our new place.”

Our new place. El loved how the phrase sounded.

Max met them at their new apartment since El had left the keys with her for the furniture to be moved there. Max said she couldn't stay but El knew her well enough to know that she was just letting Mike and El enjoy the moment alone. El's bed and dresser were in the bedroom, the other bedroom was empty, and there was a couch, coffee table, and chair in the living room. It was sparse but they were excited to buy things together to make it *theirs*.

After they looked around the place they started to bring Mike's stuff in from the trailer.

“There's a box with a blue dot on the side. Don't open it. I want to show you that myself.” Mike lifted two boxes at once and started back up the stairs.

El saw the box but as tempted as she was, she refused to give in. She brought the box inside so that it wouldn't be screaming at her to open it anymore. It didn't take them long to move everything inside.

She thought they'd start unpacking and putting their things away but Mike caught her wrist and pulled her into him, kissing her while they stood in the middle of their new living room.

“Welcome home.” He said, his voice low.

El didn't know if it was being tired from the trip, or the excitement of having Mike there with her, or the knowledge that she would get to sleep with him every night but she started to cry as she felt his lips moving gently on hers and his fingers playing with her hair.

“What's wrong?” Mike asked, only pulling away enough to look at her face. His arms stayed around her.

“I'm just happy. I love you.” She smiled. Mike didn't like to see her cry but there was definitely something about the way the tears made her eyes look even bigger and brighter that made him feel like

melting. He smiled and kissed her once more.

“I think you deserve to see your surprise now.” He found the box with the blue dot and opened it. El watched as he removed some picture frames. He kept them turned away from her so she couldn’t see what the pictures were. “I thought we could hang these up.”

He turned the first picture around so she could see it. It was the still from the carbonite chamber, before Mike was pulled back onto the platform. He had sized it as large as he could without losing quality and it looked exactly like a movie still. Mike and El were looking at each other in the picture, looking so much like Han and Leia.

Mike turned the next picture around and she saw an 8x10 of her and Mike. They were laughing and he was looking at her with adoration. They were just in regular clothes and El tried to remember what they had been doing when it was taken but she couldn’t.

“That was right after we stumbled onto the Jabba the Hutt prop and I got that guy to take our picture in front of it. I think I had said something to you about slave Leia. I know now why you laughed so much.” Mike snickered. “I still think about that every day, you know.”

El laughed. “So do I.” When he looked at her, his mouth hanging open, she just shrugged and smiled.

The third and fourth pictures were of them with Mark Hamill.

“I thought we could hang the funny one out here in the living room and the one where we’re all smiling in our room.”

In our room.

They were both thinking the same thing. They could unpack later.

“Mike, let’s go to our room.” Saying it made El smile. After she pulled him up from the floor she led him down the hall, walking backwards so she could look at him. They left the bedroom door

open, no need for privacy in their own home.

Mike still had a few days before he started his new job but El had to go back to work. Mike explored central Maine while she was out, buying a few shelves to hang in their apartment. When El returned home her Star Wars helmets had been carefully put on display on the shelves Mike had hung.

“I hope you aren’t mad that I did it without you. I just thought we should get them out of the boxes.”

“Of course I’m not mad, Mike. They look great. You are awesome. Now we just need to get a bookcase and a rug for in here. Maybe we can do that this weekend.”

“Anything you want.”

They did finish furnishing their apartment and Mike started his new job. They settled easily into a routine. El loved having Mike come home to her every day. On Sundays when he could her father drove up to have dinner with them and El thought the two men in her life got along quite well. Mike always seemed nervous before her dad arrived but El could tell that her father actually did like Mike and was just having fun making him think otherwise.

As December started to approach El had an idea. She wanted Mike’s friends to visit them, having never met them but knowing how much they meant to Mike.

“Do you think your friends would want to come visit us sometime around Christmas? Do you think they’d be free?” She asked. They were lying in bed on a Saturday morning.

“That would be awesome. I miss them. And they would love you. I’ll ask them. Would you want them to stay here with us?”

“If they want to. I mean, it would be like a sleepover I guess. Maybe Max could come too. We could act like we’re 15 again.” She laughed but the idea was pretty fun to think about.

The more Mike thought about it, the more excited he was to ask his friends to visit. There was already snow on the ground but that didn't matter. He called each of them and was happy that they all said they would get in sync so that they could come up the same weekend after Christmas.

Christmas for Mike and El was probably the best one either of them could remember. They just enjoyed lying on their rug under the Christmas lights, a fire in the fireplace, wrapped up in a blanket together. As cheesy as it sounded, as Max had pointed out when El told her about it, it was exactly the sort of romantic Christmas El had always wanted. Mike gave her a Pandora style charm bracelet with as many Star Wars sliding charms as he could find. El loved it.

El had thought for a long time about Mike's gift. She wanted it to be something he could use. She finally landed on buying him a screen accurate leather jacket like the one Han Solo wore in *The Force Awakens*. It cost more than she originally wanted to spend but it was for Mike, so it was an easy choice to make.

The Friday after Christmas El and Mike waited at the airport for Mike's friends. Max was going to meet them at the restaurant they had chosen and after they ate they would all go back to Mike and El's place to hang out and spend the night.

Mike saw Dustin first, with Lucas and Will not far behind.

"There they are." He was beaming.

El watched as Mike and his friends all hugged in the middle of the airport. She was standing just to the outside of the circle when the curly haired boy looked up from the hug and smiled at her.

"You must be El. Get in here." He pulled her into the group embrace and she felt immediately like these were *her boys*.

She couldn't stop laughing at their outrageous banter. They were closer to 30 than 20 but to hear them all talk it seemed like they never got past the age of 13. It warmed her heart. They piled into

Mike's car and he headed to the restaurant. It was a local place that served anything and everything all day and had brownies and Rice Krispies treats the size of a brick.

Max was waiting inside the restaurant, having already told the hostess how many would be in their party. The boys and El all arrived inside, shaking off the cold. El hugged Max and introduced her to everyone. Mike and El shared a look when they both noticed how Max and Lucas seemed to hold their gazes on each other longer than what they probably intended.

After dinner they all went back to Mike and El's place. The guys looked around at everything, marveling at El's collection. It was true that she had tried to make the place look as good as possible before the boys showed up. They had framed a couple of vintage posters and her helmets were all dusted and displayed, her lamp with her figures in it was serving as the main lamp in their living room, with Christmas lights still strung up. The whole area looked inviting.

Dustin was looking at the framed pictures on the wall.

"Did anyone ever tell you that you kind of look like Princess Leia?" El and Mike laughed.

"What did I say?" Dustin asked. Mike looked at El and she shook her head. *Do not tell him.*

"I've been told that on occasion. I made the, um, Leia costume I wore for the convention." She looked slyly at Mike.

"Yeah, El makes the best costumes." He grinned back at her.

Lucas was looking at them now, confusion on his face. He turned to Max.

"What is up with these two?"

Max shrugged and shook her head. "It's how they are. I know, it's sickening." Everyone laughed.

Will was admiring the helmets. “Hey, El? Do you think we could all wear one and take a picture of the whole group?”

El didn’t know why she hadn’t thought of that already. There were six of them and she had more than enough helmets.

“Sure! Who wants to be whom?”

There was a bit of arguing as they tried to decide who would wear which mask but in the end they decided they could take several pictures and change helmets for each one. Mike wore Darth Vader and El wore Mike’s Luke Skywalker Rebel Pilot helmet. Mike had bought it after the convention when he knew how much El wanted one. Even then he knew they’d be sharing their lives. Dustin chose the TIE fighter pilot, Lucas the stormtrooper, Will was Kylo Ren, and Max wore a First Order stormtrooper helmet that had been modified to have the bloody handprint on it, like Finn’s in the movie. They set up the timer on the camera and took a few shots inside before Dustin had the idea to go out into the snow and take a few. They resisted the urge to throw snowballs at one another in the expensive masks. The outside pictures turned out to be really good and as El watched the boys she finally told them that if they were careful and aimed away from the masks, she would video them throwing snowballs in the helmets. The boys were so excited. Max surprised them all with her wicked aim.

They talked into the night, telling stories about Mike and trying to embarrass him in front of El. El loved hearing every story, each causing her to feel more in love with him. She also liked to watch his face turn different shades of red. It made her giggle. She reached over and laced her fingers into his.

“We have air mattresses set up in the extra room and someone can sleep on the couch. You guys can figure it out.” Mike said. It was almost 2:30 in the morning and he had noticed how El’s head kept bobbing as she tried to stay awake. “She might as well be out. I’m taking her to bed.”

“Okay, who is *this* guy?” Lucas asked jokingly as Mike picked El up and started to carry her like it was something he’d been doing every

day for years.

“Yeah, Mike. When did you get so strong?” Dustin chimed in.

“Love is a hell of a drug.” Will laughed.

Mike rolled his eyes at them but smiled. “You guys just make yourselves at home. Max, you’re in charge.”

Once he had closed the door to the bedroom, Mike set El down on the bed. He was taking her shoes off when she woke back up.

“I like your friends.” She still sounded sleepy.

“I think it’s safe to say they’re *our* friends now. They really like you, El.”

“That makes me happy. You make me happy.” She was almost asleep again already. “I’m glad they’re here and will be here for another day. I want you to have everything you want.”

“I think I do, El.” He had been thinking of going back out to continue visiting with everyone but when he looked down at her, bundled under the covers, smiling up at him, her eyelids heavy, he decided he really just wanted to get into bed with her and feel her against him. He could talk to his friends tomorrow. They were staying all weekend.

The six of them formed a quick bond. Max fit right in with the boys, matching them tit for tat with their insults, but they laughed a lot too and felt like they were old friends. El showed them all around the UMaine campus and they all went to take a picture of themselves in front of Stephen King’s front gates, his house in the background. El knew that was another picture that would get framed and hung in their apartment. They all agreed that they should come back in the summer and go to the coast. Max tagged along to see the boys off when they had to leave at the end of the weekend. They all hugged again. El felt complete.

El had never been a fan of Valentine's Day and even though she had Mike now, her feelings toward the holiday hadn't changed. She thought she could celebrate their love every day if she wanted to and didn't need to be told when to do it. Not that it mattered because Mike was on a long shift and had to work every day starting the Thursday of that week, which was actually Valentine's Day, all through the weekend. He would be off for President's Day and the Tuesday and Wednesday following that.

"You should take off next Tuesday and Wednesday and stay here with me." Mike said.

"Why is that?" El asked.

"You're already off on Monday and I thought we could do something fun maybe." He smiled, taking a bottle of water out of the refrigerator and opening it.

"What did you have in mind? It sounds like you have an idea."

"I do actually. I wanted it to be a surprise but I guess I can tell you a little. I want to rent a cabin on a lake and eat lobster and just be with you. Like a mini vacation."

El knew immediately where he had gotten the idea. It was all the stereotypes he associated with Maine except for the clowns in sewers. She gave him her best Maine accent, only using it on special occasions.

"Ayuh, that would be wicked awesome."

Mike laughed.

On the Monday after Valentine's Day they drove to the cabin Mike had found. It was quintessential Maine, rustic, with views of the lake just outside. There was a covered back deck that had rocking chairs and framed the waterfront like a picture. They spent Monday lounging around after their arrival.

Mike had big plans for Tuesday. As evening approached he and El got dressed and went out to eat lobster at a little café that overlooked the lake. The lobster was fresh and he was told it had been caught just that morning. El preferred to have a lobster roll, being from Maine she was more well versed in the dish and didn't want to get her hands dirty cracking open the claws and the shell. She did take a picture of Mike in his lobster bib though, thinking he looked cute as he fumbled with the giant claws.

By the time they got back to their cabin it was snowing again. Mike took El's hand in his and they went out onto the back deck to watch the falling snow.

"It's like nightttime on Hoth." El said, her fingers squeezing Mike's as she gazed up at him.

"It's perfect that you just said that. *You* are perfect. For me anyway." Mike turned to face her, snow falling behind him, everything quiet except the sound of his voice. "I think I knew back in June that you were all I would ever want. I was so sure that I did something crazy but now I know I wasn't being crazy. It was like my heart knew before my head did."

"I don't know what you're talking about. What did you do?" El looked at him, puzzled.

"I'm getting to that. When we were together at the convention I knew I had done the right thing. I don't think that before that week I had ever felt true happiness. I mean, I'd been happy, but being with you was a different level. And now I get to be with you all the time but somehow it's still not enough."

El mistook his words and became worried. Mike noticed the change in her expression.

"No, that's not what I mean. I mean I want *more*. I want *forever*. And I wanted to take you somewhere awesome, like the Star Wars part of Disney World or to Celebration but I don't have the vacation time and I don't want to wait that long."

“I like just being with you here.” El smiled at him.

Mike kissed her hand. “Do you want to go stand out in the snow? It’s not falling hard.”

El nodded and they walked out into the little yard behind the cabin. The lake was starting to turn white from the snow building up on it, the top layer frozen. They stood together, facing each other, as snow fell down around them.

El was looking up and watching the snowflakes tumble toward the ground and didn’t notice Mike take a small box from his pocket.

“I bought this for you back in June.”

El snapped back to reality. She looked at Mike, who was holding the box out to her. He was standing so she thought it was just a gift. He slowly opened the box.

“Do you think a princess and a guy like me...?” Mike’s swagger was amusing.

El looked down at the ring in the box. Mike was starting to take it out and she noticed that his fingers were shaking. She reached out to steady him. She had tears in her eyes.

“You bought this in June?”

“I said I did something crazy. I love you. I’ve always known. What do you think? Would you want to marry me?” Mike looked at her expectantly.

She couldn’t find words but she found she could move so she threw her arms around him and pulled herself up so that she could kiss him, almost causing him to drop the ring in the snow. He held on to it though and they both laughed. Tears were streaming down El’s cheeks and she nodded at Mike, still unable to speak but also unable to *stop* smiling.

“Oh yeah. I had it inscribed. Let’s go back inside and you can see it

better in the light.” Mike started to pull her along back into the cabin but then stopped. “Wait, let’s take a picture. I’ll post it on Rebelscum.” He held her left hand and slid the ring onto her finger. She admired it reverently. Mike held his phone out, pulling her as close to him as he could. She held her hand up so the ring could be seen and he snapped the picture.

Once they got back inside and removed their coats and boots El took the ring off so Mike could show her what he’d had inscribed in the band. Mike rambled on about why he chose that particular ring and how he’d guessed at what kind of stones she might want to surround the diamond but El just stared at the inside of the band. It was just two words but they meant everything to her.

I know.

“Mike, would you put it back on my finger? I like it when you slip it on.” El was being suggestive and she knew it. Mike did as she asked, slowly sliding the ring back on her finger. She looked into his eyes, his hand still on hers. “I love this. And I love you.”

He kissed her but before they got too carried away he stopped and quickly posted the picture of them he’d taken to their Star Wars forum. It was a simple post, just the picture with a caption that read, *Elderaan and Nerfherder are getting married!*

Mike turned his attention back to El. She was looking at him with more desire than possibly he’d ever seen from her, and that was saying a lot because she was always so into him. They opted to stay on the couch, the fire in the fireplace making the room warm even when they were undressed. El loved it when she would put her hand on his chest and her ring would sparkle, reminding her that she was *his* and he was *hers*. They loved each other into the night, both having found exactly what they had always wanted.

Notes for the Chapter:

Sorry this got a little sappy. It just kind of happened. I hope to bring it back around, reprise the theme song and roll the credits with the epilogue. Thank

you for reading and I hope it was somewhat enjoyable. I'll try to finish it up in the next few days. Goodbyes are so hard...

13. Chapter 13

Epilogue

“I’m almost finished!” El called to Mike, who she knew was loitering in the hallway waiting for her to complete the sewing project she had been working on. She knew he was excited. She was as well. It had taken her a few weeks to do, since her life at home was now constant chaos, but it was a labor of love.

Mike had surprised her with tickets to the 45th Anniversary Star Wars Celebration that would once again be held in Indianapolis. He felt like he’d lucked out since the previous year it had been in London and the year before that it was held in Los Angeles. Being a major anniversary, he was hoping they would pull out all the stops and he knew his parents would be more than happy for them to be in Indiana for a few days. It was only two weeks away now and they were getting more and more excited as the days passed.

They had gotten married in October of the same year Mike proposed. The trees were beautiful and their friends flew in to join them. It was a small wedding but was everything El had imagined it would be. She didn’t want to waste a lot of money on a wedding, which is just one day, when she could use the money to buy things for their future, like a house. So that’s what they did. They had a small, intimate wedding and had bought a house that they could fix up. It was a front gabled craftsman style dwelling with a porch that extended the entire width of the house. It was exactly what El had always dreamed of. There were plenty of built-in bookcases to hold their books as well as their collection, which continued to grow.

They had spent the majority of the year after they got married renovating their new home until El could no longer see her feet. Mike would notice how tired she looked and steer her away from painting or sanding or whatever small task she had been trying to accomplish, smiling and moving her to a comfortable chair where she would sit while he rubbed her feet and they would imagine what

their life would be like a year from then. Ben was born on Halloween. The perfect combination of Mike and El, he had his father's hair and his mother's eyes.

He was now a toddler and enamored with his parents' collection. Mike called him *Lord Helmet* because when he would wear one of the Star Wars helmets, which he wanted to do all the time, Mike thought he looked like the character of the same name from *Spaceballs*. El thought he looked like a bobblehead doll. She had been working every chance she got on a costume for him for the convention. She had kept it a secret from Mike, not telling him what costumes she was making. She was proud of herself for thinking so outside the box. She had two sets for them to wear.

The plan was for Mike, El, and Ben to fly into Indianapolis and spend the first two days at the con and then Mike's parents would come get the baby and let Mike and El have the rest of the convention to themselves. El and Mike were looking forward to the alone time almost more than the convention itself.

"Can I see yet?" Mike called. It was clear he was just on the other side of the door, most likely with his face pushed against it.

El smiled to herself. She loved him so much. "Are you sure you want to see it or should I put Ben in it and then let you see?"

"Well he's right here with me. I can send him in. He's standing exactly the same way I am." Mike laughed and El could imagine her son and her husband standing side by side with their faces pressed against the door to her sewing room.

"Send him in then." El heard a soft *go see Mommy* as the door opened and in walked her son. Like his father, he was wearing a Star Wars shirt. Ben's had a stormtrooper helmet on it and said *this is my happy face*.

"Close the door, Mike. I'll send him out when he's ready." She heard Mike groan but the door gently closed.

She tried the first of Ben's costumes on him. He was no stranger to

getting dressed up in costume. Being born on Halloween, Mike and El wanted it to be something he liked. He had taken to it well. When El had zipped him up she turned him around to look at him and laughed.

“You are the *cutest* Wookiee in the galaxy! Go show Daddy.” She followed him into the hall where Mike was waiting.

“Chewie? You look awesome, buddy! Mommy is so amazing!” He picked him up and swung him up, careful to not hit his head on the ceiling. Ben cackled. Mike walked over to El and kissed her, still holding Ben.

“Ours are hanging in the sewing room. Wanna see?”

“You know I do.” The three of them walked back into the room and El opened the closet door to reveal the costumes that would compliment Ben’s.

“Hoth Han and Leia? How did you make these look so good? I mean, these are *perfect*, El.” Mike ran his fingers over the fabric.

“Well I bought the jackets. I had to track them down because Columbia stopped selling them a while ago, and we will definitely have to wear them for real when it’s cold because they were not cheap, but they look so great. I even got you the goggles and the gloves. I had to make the gloves. We’ll have the best family pictures ever.” Her smile overtook her face. Mike felt himself smile too.

“Okay, time for costume number two, Chewie,” El said to Ben. “Tell Daddy to step out again.”

“Step *out*, Daddy.”

Mike threw his hands up but was chuckling. Ben’s language skills were really coming along well.

When the door opened again Mike was a little confused. Out stepped his son but it wasn’t a costume he recognized. It looked like a cross between Luke Skywalker’s outfit from *A New Hope* and young Obi-

Wan Kenobi but instead of brown and tan El had used black, gray, and white. Mike thought it looked really cool but he wasn't sure who it was supposed to be. El had combed Ben's black hair to the side and since he hadn't yet ever had a haircut it looked like his father's, kind of long-ish and wavy.

"I don't get it. It looks great, but I'm not getting it."

"Okay, I was a little weird with this one but listen to my thinking process. Our costumes are in the closet. Do you want me to tell you or do you want to see ours and try to guess?" She was biting her lip and Mike knew she was feeling anxious about it.

"You can just explain it. I trust you, El. I know it'll make sense." He smiled at her.

"Well Ben is actually Ben Solo," El told him.

"And who are we?"

"We're Han and Leia. We're *always* Han and Leia, Mike." She kissed him. They had walked to the closet again and were standing in front of the door. El pushed the Hoth costumes aside and brought out the other set. Mike couldn't believe what he saw. It was clear to him now that she had used Ben's current age to design costumes that were what she thought Han and Leia might wear when they had a toddler running around. There were obvious nods to their other outfits but it was entirely El's idea and Mike was astonished. He wanted to see what they looked like in them. El was admiring her work but Mike couldn't look away from his wife.

"You are so exceptionally amazing," he whispered as he pulled her close to him.

"I even thought of how she might wear her hair so I'll do that when we're there. We can try them on but I'm not going all out today. Not for *that* anyway." El winked at Mike. Mike thought maybe tonight Ben could go to bed a little early.

They both changed into the costumes and Mike was so impressed he

took a picture of the three of them and immediately texted it to Lucas, Will, and Dustin.

Guess who we are!

Within minutes he already had a reply from Dustin.

Son of a bitch, you're the fucking Solos! That is AWESOME!

Mike showed El Dustin's text and she blushed. She had been happy with her work but that he immediately recognized what she had been going for made her feel overjoyed.

Once Ben was down that night and Mike and El were in bed, Mike showed her how much he appreciated her...*twice*.

"I can't wait until we get to be alone and I don't feel like we have to be so quiet anymore." El's hand was on Mike's cheek and he could see her eyes sparkle slightly.

"I promise that I'll make our time be unforgettable. You won't have to be quiet. I won't *let* you." He started to tickle her, sliding over her and feeling her laugh underneath him. When he stopped tickling her he was still lying on top of her, their breathing heavy, looking into each other's eyes.

"I love you." She whispered.

So maybe he showed her three times that night.

Two weeks later they flew into Indianapolis and took a taxi to the hotel, the same hotel where they had first professed their love four years earlier. Both Mike and El loved the way Ben would point at the giant props and clap when he saw people in costume, recognizing most of them. Mike picked up their lanyards and Ben's kid's pass and they all went to the room to get settled before they made their first appearance at the convention. They had brought a stroller but weren't planning on using it unless absolutely necessary. Ben was clearly excited and they wanted pictures and video of him walking

around and meeting everyone.

El got Ben into his Chewbacca costume and then got herself ready while he ran around and played with his stuffed Wampa. She had made his costume look like it had snow on the shoulders and the top of the head. Mike was getting into character as well. They had noticed downstairs that it seemed to be very cool in the building so El wasn't as worried as she had been about them getting overheated in their winter attire.

"You look pretty," Mike said. He was standing next to the mirror adjusting the goggles on his head. El smiled and kissed him.

"You look *hot*, and I don't mean because you're wearing a parka inside." Her eyes looked him up and down before landing back on his face. She leaned in to whisper in his ear, "I'll help you take it off later." Mike gulped and nodded.

The convention floor was full of characters Ben recognized and they made sure to get pictures of him with everyone. Their own costumes caused quite a flurry of camera flashes as people rushed to them to ask for pics with them. There was a lifesize Tauntaun and they took a family picture in front of it before they noticed hidden steps to the saddle so Mike took Ben up and they both sat in the saddle of the Tauntaun while El took their picture.

Mike filmed El walking in front of him, holding Ben's hand. He loved watching them together and his heart felt full when she looked back over her shoulder at him and smiled.

They saw a group of little kids dressed as Han, Luke, and Leia so they asked if Ben could take a picture with them. The kids were all a few years older than him but they all gave Ben a high five.

El could tell that despite his pointing and *oohs* and *aahs* Ben was getting tired. It was starting to get toward the end of day one anyway so they went back up and changed and then Mike ordered room service so Ben could eat and they could put him to bed. Once he was asleep they looked at each other and grinned, knowing they had to be super sneaky and loving the risk.

“What time are your parents going to be here tomorrow?” El whispered to Mike, her head was on his chest and she was playing with his fingers. They were both still breathing a little hard.

“They’re supposed to be here before 6:00. I’ll call Mom in the morning before we go downstairs but that’s what she’d said the last time we talked about it. She wanted to come get him today but I want to wear our costumes. And he’s fun.”

“He *is* fun. Because he’s part you. But I’m really looking forward to tomorrow night and the next few days.”

“Me too. I want you to be all *that’s no moon, that’s a space station!*” Mike kissed her head.

“That’s what I always think, Mike.” She lifted her head and smiled seductively at him.

The next morning while El fed Ben a waffle Mike talked to his mom and found out that his parents would be at the hotel by 6:00 like he had thought. They would have the whole day to have fun at the convention. El and Mike were both feeling extra electricity between them, knowing that when nighttime fell it would be like before, when they had no obligations and could just get lost in each other. Their excitement spilled over as gentle caresses and kisses every time one of them passed by the other in the room as they were getting their costumes on.

The costume El had made for Mike included dark gray pants with a yellow stripe running down the sides of the legs, a long sleeved white shirt that looked aged, not terribly dissimilar to all of Han Solo’s shirts, and a black leather jacket that was distressed and had eight pockets on the front. He wore his leather holster and his Han boots from the previous year.

El’s costume was light gray pants that were tight fitting and were tucked into white leather boots that went to her knees. Her top was the same color gray as her pants, form fitting and covered by a long

sleeved white jacket that fell just above her navel. She wore a white utility style belt which divided the costume perfectly. Her hair was pulled back into two braids that stopped just at her neckline. She stepped out of the bathroom after finishing her hair. Mike looked up at her.

“Holy shit.” His mouth was open.

“Holy shit.” Ben repeated.

“I guess I’ll take that as a compliment?” She laughed.

“Definitely. You look beautiful.”

They dressed Ben and made their way to the convention floor. To the delight of El, most people seemed to know who they were trying to be.

“Oh my god!” One woman cried. “This is fabulous! I swear this has got to be exactly what Kylo Ren looked like as a baby. And what’s your name?” She asked Ben.

“Ben.”

“Wow, you’ve trained him *so well!*” The woman laughed and took a picture of the three of them.

Mike winked at El.

The costumes turned out to be even more popular than the Hoth costumes. Mike had Ben on his shoulders and they were walking past a setup that looked like the Millennium Falcon cockpit when once again a cameraman walked up to him and asked him if they could use the three of them in their montage of the convention.

“I mean, this is pretty amazing. You created your own thing but I knew exactly who you were supposed to be.”

“It was all my wife’s idea. She’s the creative one. She thought of it and made everything.” Mike beamed at El, who was blushing.

“Why don’t the three of you stand here next to the Falcon like it’s the family car?”

Mike, El, and Ben stood next to the Falcon and the man took some pictures.

“Okay, I’m going to film now. Why don’t you let the little one run around here and mom you act like you’re trying to catch him. Dad, you inspect something on the Falcon.” He started filming and they did as he said. Ben ran under the cockpit and started up the ramp, which didn’t lead anywhere but looked excellent for pictures.

“That was great! Thank you so much.” A woman walked up to the cameraman and he spoke to her briefly. “This is my assistant. She will see to it that you can get a copy of this. He won’t be this little for long!”

They spent the day wandering around and pretty much following Ben, letting him walk and watching to see what interested him. They had lunch in their costumes and took several pictures with people in the restaurant.

When Karen and Ted Wheeler arrived to pick up Ben they were all still in their costumes. El gathered Ben’s things while Karen swooned over Ben, kissing him and tickling him. Mike smiled, remembering how his mother had done the same to him when he was little. Once they were off, after El and Mike had both kissed Ben goodbye and Mike had shut the door to their room, he turned to her. She was looking at him like she had the first time she met him.

“We’re not going anywhere for the next two days,” Mike assured her and she nodded, meeting him halfway as he crossed to her.

“Mike, I want you so bad.” El was pushing his jacket over his shoulders in an attempt to remove it.

“Not as bad as I want *you*.” Mike was already sucking on her neck, his lips moving down toward her collarbone.

“Shit. Shoes.” El mumbled and then they both took off their boots. Mike used the break to remove his jacket and holster. El was already fumbling with the button on his pants. She had taken off her jacket after her boots.

“Look, the mirror is still here,” Mike said as El nibbled on his lower lip, her hands pulling apart the buttons on his shirt.

“Then you can show me everything you’re doing.” El pushed his shirt off his torso, leaving him on his knees, his pants unbuttoned and hanging open.

Mike felt like he needed to catch up to her so he started pushing her waistband over her hips.

“Jesus, you aren’t wearing panties? How do you keep getting *hotter*?” His hands felt her skin and squeezed before he finished his task.

“Isn’t that what you like?” She grinned at him, quickly moving back to kissing his chest.

Mike pulled her up, his hands on the sides of her face, and held her head so close to his their noses were almost touching. “Fuck, I love you.”

Their faces crashed together with passion and eagerness, not wanting to waste a minute with each other. Mike had removed El’s top and was moving back and forth between her breasts. She was sitting in his lap in the middle of the bed watching the mirror. It was just as exciting as the first time she had watched him. She could feel him against her.

“I like to think about that time with the slave costume. It was so hot watching you.” El was whispering into Mike’s ear, occasionally licking his earlobe.

“That was my favorite. But you still are just as hot as you were then. I still get hard thinking about you.” Mike ran his nose along her jaw line.

“You do? Even if I’m not around?”

“El, you are the sexiest thing ever. You haven’t changed. I will *always* want you and you will *always* turn me on.” Mike kissed her again, their tongues getting more urgent. Mike could feel how ready she was from her position in his lap, straddling him, both of them sideways on the bed so they could turn their heads and see the mirror if they chose to.

“Mike, I need you now.” She looked at him and he could see her desperation, could see how she wanted give herself over to him and what he could make her feel.

Mike already had his hands around her waist so he simply slid them down a little until he was holding her by her ass cheeks. He lifted her up a little so that he could slide inside her. Wanting her to feel everything more, he held her near the tip but didn’t let her move lower until she was squirming and begging him to let her have him. She was alternating between looking in the mirror and looking at Mike, who was watching only *her* as he teased her.

“Please?” Her voice was a whisper and she kissed him sweetly as she asked.

In one motion he let her go and pushed her down, causing her to gasp and cry out.

“Is that what you wanted?” Mike growled, savoring how she felt around him.

“Yes, that’s what I *needed*, Mike. Oh, fuck.” She threw her head back but quickly remembered the mirror and started to watch.

“You like to watch, I know it. I like to see your face when you feel me deep inside you. It’s so sexy, El.” Mike was moving her all by himself, the years of being with her allowing him to know exactly what she liked and how to move.

“We need to get a mirror for our room.” El panted as she rode him.

“Fuck, I’m going to soundproof the basement and put a lock on the door and we can be as loud as we want.” Mike stated, sweat was forming on his brow. El wiped it away and then kissed him sloppily, the force of his bouncing causing her to lose control of finesse.

“Yes, you should definitely do that. I need to be able to be loud with you. You make me want to scream your name.” El looked at the mirror again, catching Mike’s eyes in it.

“Let’s watch until we come. I want to see us both.” Mike kissed her again before turning his head back to the mirror. He held her close and kept his rhythm.

“Okay, it’s not going to be long. Fuck, you’re so good at this.” El resisted the urge to close her eyes, wanting to do what Mike had suggested. “Every time you push me down I feel it getting closer, Mike. Every time you slide in I want to pull you deeper.” She was watching his face in the mirror as she talked to him, loving how his eyebrows were raising with her admission.

“El, I can feel it. I’m so close.”

Mike pushed her down again and she held herself there for a few seconds before she started moving her hips in slow circles, not letting him pull her back up. She watched the mirror.

“M-Mike. Mike!” She continued to swirl around him. “Oh, uhn! Oh fuck, Mike!” She inhaled deeply and pushed down even deeper. “Oh, fuck! Now, Mike!”

Mike couldn’t hold out any longer but when he felt her tighten around him even more he let the sensation overtake him and he watched as they both climaxed at the same time, their eyes never wavering from each other’s in the mirror. El finally turned his face so it was facing hers and she kissed him deeply, not so sloppily this time, using her lips and tongue as a team and making him moan even in his state of recovery.

They showered together after that and but didn’t fall asleep until

almost dawn, taking full advantage of being alone. The next couple of days were spent in much the same way, though they did make it down to the closing ceremony to see the video. When they saw Ben running around the Falcon Mike put his arm around El and felt her hand slide into his.

Conventions became something they did as a family and they enjoyed them all, but for Mike and El the best one would always be that first Star Wars convention, when they first kissed and had a lot of other firsts, when they figured out that they wanted to be together, when they became what they are, when a princess and a scoundrel fell in love.

Notes for the Chapter:

This story started out as something that actually happened in my life. I changed the type of convention from horror to Star Wars and at first it was a little painful to relive some of the memories but somewhere along the way the story became its own creature and I found I was excited to keep writing it and see what happened. Mileven turned a bad memory into a good one and now when I think about it, I only think about this story. So it was cathartic and I feel better now. And I checked the wiki and Star Wars Celebration II and III were both held in Indianapolis so it wasn't crazy for me to set my story there, and for that I am happy because I wanted to try to keep it as real as I could. It's sad that it's over. I really appreciate the reviews and kind words and I hope everyone enjoyed reading it.

I'll be starting a new story soon but heads up that it will be darker and El will have some issues. But like all of my stories, it will be all about Mileven, whom I cannot make suffer for long.

Author's Note:

I know there is no Star Wars convention in Indianapolis but Mask-Fest is held there every year

and that is what this is loosely based on. I decided to Milevenize the story to make it something worth remembering. It will earn its M rating in future chapters.